

**Identity and Environmentalism in Zapatista Public Discourse
on the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve**

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ABSTRACT

Since they first emerged into the public consciousness in 1994, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) has gathered considerable attention and support on the world stage for its struggle with the Mexican federal government over the issue of indigenous rights. The Zapatistas are now popularly viewed as indigenous rebels standing up for indigenous rights against the neoliberal economics. Yet comparatively less attention has been given to its struggles with the federal government over an area of protected land within the Lacandón jungle known as the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The conflict is centered on a large settler population within the Reserve and whether it is a threat to the jungle's viability. The environmental group, Conservation International (CI) believes that they are, yet the settlers enjoy the support of the EZLN, who opposes any attempt to move them. Despite this dispute, the two organizations claim seemingly similar goals. CI has declared that it is dedicated to local control over conservation projects. Meanwhile, EZLN has been fighting for greater local political power in regards to indigenous government. More striking still, is that this matter has placed the EZLN in direct opposition to the Lacandón Maya, even though it has portrayed itself as the defender of all of Mexico's indigenous people.

It is these apparent contradictions between the EZLN's political positions and the actual sides of the conflict that make the struggle over Montes Azules worth examining. Beyond the simplified statements of public platforms, the objections of the EZLN to the reserve and its supporters to the Lacandones' position are rooted in historical conflicts over decision making on landholding. The EZLN feels that the government has constantly excluded indigenous farmers from decision making over this matter to their detriment and thus it feels that local control over land is a fundamental part of indigenous life. As such its position on Montes Azules must be understood in terms of how its ideas of being indigenous come into conflict with the Lacandón Maya's territory in the reserve and CI's position on the settler population. In this way indigenous identity is seen not merely as a matter of cultural significance, but a foundation for a concrete political agenda, which is articulated in the EZLN's stance over Montes Azules.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	i.
ABSTRACT.....	ii.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii.
DEDICATION.....	iv.
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v.
INTRODUCTION.....	1.
CHAPTER ONE:.....	9.
The Mexican Revolution, Agrarian Reform and the Role of the Lacandón Jungle in Agriculture	
CHAPTER TWO:.....	29.
Conservation International and the Zapatistas, the Conflict of Conservation and Culture	
CHAPTER THREE:.....	51.
Federal Policy and Zapatista Governance, the Conflict of Government Planning and Local Political Culture	
CHAPTER FOUR:.....	71.
The Zapatistas and the Lacandón, Indigenous Identity in the Conflict Over Land	
CONCLUSION:.....	89.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	94.
APPENDIX ONE.....	105.
APPENDIX TWO.....	106.
APPENDIX THREE.....	108.
APPENDIX FOUR.....	111.

Introduction:

Since the 1970s environmental conservation has become a major issue. Even businesses make a public effort to assert their environmental credentials. The Ford Motor Company for example, has publicized on its website its donations to and association with a Washington D.C. based environmental organization known as Conservation International.¹ When Conservation International (CI) started work in 1987, it began not in the United States, but in Latin America. Specifically it started in the nature reserves of the Beni Biosphere Reserve in Bolivia, the La Amistad Biosphere Reserve in Costa Rica, and the Gulf of California Biosphere Reserve in Mexico.² CI's primary concern lies with preserving the diverse variety of species within such areas. In order to accomplish this task, it ultimately takes interest in the human populations living within these ecosystems. According to CI, it sees people living in endangered ecosystems as both the ultimate cause and ultimate solution to conservation problems in these areas. As a result, CI has ostensibly adopted the idea of local populations maintaining control over conservation as its guiding principle in its approach to conservation and has stated that conservation efforts can only be successful if local people are in control.³

Yet CI's efforts have been met with cynicism from many sectors of the left. To cite one example, at a 2004 picket of an Edinburgh Starbucks over union conditions protestors also criticized the company for its alliance with Conservation International.⁴

¹ N.A., N.D., "Ford Motor Company – Conservation International," <<http://www.ford.com/en/goodWorks/environment/natureAndWildlife/conservationInternational.htm>> (16 January 2006).

² Conservation International, The First Decade: 1987-1997 (Washington: CI Communications Department, 1996), 65.

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ Edinburgh-Chiapas Solidarity Group and Edinburgh IWW, 20 November 2004, "Protesters Picket Edinburgh Starbucks," <<https://www3.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/11/301555.html>> (17 January 2006).

Most of this scorn is directed at CI's efforts in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve found in the Lacandón Jungle, located in the Mexican state of Chiapas. The Lacandón Jungle is currently the center of the one the most famous political conflicts in Latin American history in recent years: the dispute between the federal government of Mexico and the indigenous peasant rebel organization, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional – EZLN).

The Zapatista rebellion is widely regarded as an important example of ordinary people in the Third World standing up against neoliberal economic policies. As a result the EZLN is celebrated among much of the left, especially since the EZLN's opposition to these policies is a cornerstone of its principles. The EZLN portrays its struggle as one of indigenous people trying to preserve their culture and their freedom against such policies. In doing so, it has often been quite hostile to political interests in Mexico City which it sees as imposing their will on Mexico's indigenous people against the wishes of the latter. Conservation International on the other hand has allied itself with the Mexican government, which has shown continued interest in pushing neoliberal economic policies.

My own interest in the matter was initially sparked by the seemingly unusual split in the traditional alliance of left-wing politics and conservation concerns caused by this issue, even more so given that defending indigenous rights has often been linked to maintenance of the environment. However, my interest in this topic is more fundamentally rooted in my wider interest in grassroots social and political movements. In particular this interest is focused on those movements that seek to create their own forms of political and economic organization as alternatives to established institutions. I originally developed an interest in this topic from studying the Spanish Anarchists's

actions during the opening months of the Spanish Civil War. Immediately following the onset of the war, the anarchists of Spain set up collectives in order to compensate for the shutdown of economic production that had occurred. These collectives were not only meant to provide a material basis for resistance to the Nationalist forces, but allow the anarchists to carry out this resistance according to the forms of economic organization that they favoured. From there, I developed a wider interest in other such movements, particularly those in Latin America where the dominant political and economic structures have repeatedly fallen short of the needs of much of the population, necessitating social movements that offer alternative structures.

As far as this thesis is concerned, I am mainly interested in studying the identity of social movements and the process by which this identity is shaped. Social movements that offer alternatives to established economic and political structures often define themselves in opposition to what they see as an unacceptable status quo. In doing so, they create a group identity that places them outside of the political establishment and serves as a basic reference point for the alternatives that a movement puts forth. The Spanish Anarchists, for example, were reacting against the semi-feudal conditions of Spain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as against early industrial capitalism. This led them to propose that society should be organized along the lines of economic collectives that would be operated and controlled by producers.⁵ They did so as producers dissatisfied with the working conditions and political environment of Spain

⁵ Murray Bookchin, "Introductory Essay," in The Anarchist Collectives: Worker's Self Management in the Spanish Revolution 1936-1939, ed. Sam Dolgoff (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1974), xv-xvii; George Richard Esenweh, Anarchist Ideology and the Working-Class Movement of Spain, 1868-1898 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 22-23, 27-28; Robert W. Kern, Red Years/Black Years: A Political History of Spanish Anarchism 1911-1937 (Philadelphia: A Publication of the Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978), 9-15, 25.

at the time. To cite a Latin American example, the members of Brazil's Landless Worker's Movement, who seek to implement land reform in their country, refer to themselves as the "Sem Terra," which means "landless" in Portuguese. According to their English language site, this name has become a symbol of dignity among those involved in the movement when previously many of them had been called vagrants because of their landless status.⁶ The Sem Terra's self-definition is telling in how they take their outcast status as a point of pride while calling attention to Brazil's extremely skewed patterns of land and wealth distribution.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army follows a somewhat similar pattern by taking its name from one Mexico's great historical figures, Emiliano Zapata, a mestizo farmer who led an uprising against the Mexican government over issues of land distribution in 1911. By doing this, the organization identifies itself with the agrarian issues that have been a major part of Mexican politics since the Mexican Revolution. At the same time, the EZLN has also explicitly and proudly identified itself as being an indigenous organization committed to ensuring that indigenous rights are respected and fulfilled. Much like the organizations cited above, these views are in part a response to the environment in which the EZLN operates. The group's origins lay in a cadre of Marxist urban guerrillas that went into the jungle in the early 1980s to foster revolution among the indigenous communities there. Instead they integrated themselves into the communities, readjusting their views according to the experience of the residents. Eventually the organisation gained a predominantly indigenous membership. When the EZLN did launch an uprising it was not to overthrow the government, but to call attention

⁶ N.A., N.D., "Who Are the Landless or Sem Terra?" <<http://www.mstbrazil.org/?q=quemsomos>> (31 January 2006).

to the material deprivation of the indigenous people of south-eastern Chiapas. This image that the organization maintains of itself as a group of deprived indigenous Mexicans, who identify with the ideals of Emiliano Zapata, is what underpins its critique of the Mexican establishment.

Considering these facts, it would seem that Conservation International's vocal support for local control over conservation policies would make it quite sympathetic to the EZLN. However, the EZLN has reacted negatively to conservation efforts in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, characterizing them as front operations for neoliberal economic policies. Much of this attitude seems to stem from the involvement of the Mexican government in conservation efforts in the reserve as well as the actual conservation practices of CI. This thesis sets out to examine this situation and show that much of the conflict is due to the EZLN's identity as an indigenous organization standing up for indigenous rights.

For the purposes of establishing a historical context, the thesis begins with a history of the Mexican Revolution. The first chapter looks at the role that land issues played in the Revolution and how the government adopted Emiliano Zapata's program of land reform in order to win the loyalty of the populace and thus avoid future rebellion. This chapter shall also cover how the government ended up abandoning this program in the 1980s under the pressure of debt and under a new wave of leaders who favoured neo-liberal economics. It is this abandonment of agrarian reform, and with it the supposed ideals of the Revolution, that has served as the main impetus for the Zapatista revolt. By examining the role of land in the history of the Mexican Revolution one can better

understand the matters is necessary for understanding the EZLN's attitudes towards CI and the Jungle itself.

The second chapter examines the divide between Conservation International and the Zapatistas, focusing on how the two groups view the situation within the jungle. Despite its rhetoric of local control, CI's viewpoint is still that of an American conservationist group operating in several different countries, but whose policies come from Washington. This stands in stark contrast to the EZLN, who work primarily from a local perspective of events within the Lacandón Jungle, a view which is shaped to a great degree by a populist interpretation of Mexican history. The clash of these two viewpoints defines much of the conflict between indigenous and conservationist groups within the jungle. This chapter will also examine how CI's ideas are applied to the Maya Biosphere Reserve (located within the portions of the Lacandón that fall within Guatemala's borders) in order to elucidate how the organization operates in relation to local populations.

This issue is directly connected to the matter of the EZLN's relationship with Mexico's government, perhaps the most important part of the conflict over Montes Azules. The federal government's involvement in the jungle in part affects the Zapatistas attitudes towards environmental groups. The EZLN has maintained considerable antipathy towards whomever is in the seat of power in Mexico City due to a seeming indifference, and at times outright hostility, of various governments towards the needs of those indigenous communities in Zapatista territory. For the Zapatistas' this lack of concern is reflected in the government's conservation policies in the jungle, which, like CI's, involve little input from local populations and are regarded by the EZLN as front

activities for resource extraction by foreign multinationals. As a result the EZLN claims that this process has facilitated the use of the military to clear Zapatista settlers out of the reserve so as to eliminate a major source of resistance to these policies. These positions are also informed by the belief that the government's approach is the driving force behind the administration of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. By examining these issues I hope to demonstrate how the conflict with the government over the jungle is defined by the EZLN's identity as an indigenous organisation defending indigenous rights against centralized political power and corporate greed.

A more direct indicator of how this conflict has been defined by Zapatista identity is seen in the group's perceptions of the Lacandón Maya, who provide the bulk of indigenous support for CI and the government in the reserve. Much of the EZLN's statements about Mexico's indigenous people place their goals and aspirations alongside those of the EZLN itself. This assumption is not necessarily unjustified given the widespread support for the EZLN. However, the Lacandón Maya are an anomaly in the EZLN's worldview since they have sided instead with the Mexican government. The EZLN has never acknowledged this and only mentions the Lacandón in passing in their communiqués. However, many of their supporters have reacted to the Lacandón with outright hostility, including questioning the legitimacy with which they use the name "Lacandón" due to their alliance with the government.

It is worth noting, for the sake of the reader, that my thesis is examining the underlying values and beliefs of a political organisation. Many of its sources are writings by the EZLN or public reports of Conservation International. Neither of these sources could be considered reliable pieces of evidence in themselves about events in the jungle

since both are the writings of organisations seeking to further their political agenda. However, this is not why those sources are used. Instead they have been used in this thesis to provide insight into the thinking of the two organisations, particularly the EZLN whose ideas of what it means to be indigenous in Mexico are of primary focus in this thesis. And in CI's case, its public reports have been used to shed light on the inconsistencies between its rhetoric and actions, as well as where the organisation's understanding of the political situation in the Lacandón jungle has fallen short. As such these sources are used as discourse to be analysed rather than a reliable record of events.

The conflict over the reserve is inextricably tied up in the historical conflicts that gave rise to the Zapatista Rebellion in the first place. Much of the EZLN's statements about the jungle are framed in the same terms that it has used in addressing government policy towards indigenous people and the economy. The government's abandonment of agrarian reform and other social programs has been a sticking point for the Zapatistas' and the basis for the EZLN's claim that Mexico's indigenous people have been abandoned by the government. In the matter of the Montes Azules, these issues are brought up to question the sincerity of the government's conservation efforts and declare the necessity of protecting indigenous rights in order to protect the Jungle as well. Examining all of these points, it is clear that the Zapatista National Liberation Army's position on the reserve is defined by its ideas about what it means to be indigenous in Mexico. Consequently, the dispute over the Reserve should be understood in these terms if one is to understand the why the Zapatistas refuse to cooperate with either CI or the Mexican government.

Chapter One: The Mexican Revolution, Agrarian Reform and the Role of the Lacandón Jungle in Agriculture

The conflict within the Lacandón Jungle over the Montes Azules Biosphere reserve cannot be understood in isolation from the political history of twentieth century Mexico or the role that land reform has played in it. One of the common themes of Zapatista literature is that the Mexican state has failed to concern itself with the needs of the rural poor, particularly Mexico's indigenous people. This grievance is hardly a new phenomenon in Mexican history. It was the same grievance that led peasant leader Emiliano Zapata to rebel against the government in 1911 after the new President of Mexico, Francisco Madero, had failed to make good on his promises to enact land reform. In the case of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (*Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional* - EZLN) this complaint was a response to the Federal Government's abandonment of agrarian reform in the 1980s in favour of neo-liberal economic policies.

This position is also a reaction to the Federal government's often inconsistent stance towards land reform in the past. In particular, it is a product of the government creating the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve in the Lacandón Jungle even though there were pre-existing land claims on the same tract of land dating back to the early 1970s when the government opened up the area to colonization in order to calm rural unrest. The most noticeable feature of this matter is that Agrarian Reform had maintained relative social stability from the 1920s up to around 1994. During both the Mexican Revolution and Zapatista uprising, the key complaint of rebels was that the Mexican government had ignored the rural populace most affected by its policies and excluded

them from the decision-making process. In the case of the EZLN however, this was complaint was specifically applied to the plight of Chiapas' indigenous people.

Since the purpose of the thesis is to examine how the EZLN has responded to Conservation International's claims that Mayan settlers have been deforesting the Lacandón Jungle, I must explain the role of land reform in the Mexican political landscape as well as the role that the Lacandón jungle has played in agrarian reform in Chiapas. Furthermore, I must explain how these matters feed into the current conflict in Chiapas. Mexico, like many other Latin American nations, has never resolved the social problems that arise from moving from a dualistic economy based on large estates and a subsistence agrarian sector to a free-market economy based on private property and export crops. Unlike nations such as Guatemala or El Salvador though, the Mexican government was able to develop a system for keeping a cap on social dissent without resorting to continuous violence against peasants. This system remained relatively effective up until the late 1970s. This system was institutionalized land redistribution or agrarian reform, which guaranteed land to rural communities lacking it. However, as seen from the historical record, agrarian reform in Mexico has never served as a solution to the disadvantaged position of peasants. It has merely served as a stop-gap measure against political unrest from governments more interested in encouraging large-scale agriculture. One of the results of this position was that the government opened the Lacandón jungle to colonization in the early 1970s in order to prevent peasants from trying to expropriate land from commercial estates.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 was largely caused by the loss of village land to large estates known as *haciendas* or *latifundia*. Much of this occurred during of the late

nineteenth and early twentieth century under Porfirio Díaz. Prior to 1850, when Díaz became President, Mexico had been in a state of near civil war which greatly hindered the process of expropriation. Díaz's authoritarian regime afforded the necessary stability in which commercial agriculture could develop and sustain an attack on communal property.⁷ The construction of railways accelerated these processes by greatly reducing transport costs as well as connecting once exclusively local economies to regional, national, and international markets. Soon the export sector was the fastest growing part of the Mexican economy,⁸ and plantation owners moved quickly into the nineteenth century international cane and beet sugar economy. To aid their endeavours in fulfilling the demands of the export market, landowners lobbied the government to adopt policies amiable to their enterprises, including those that would allow them to obtain more land.⁹ One of the most important results of their efforts was an 1894 law known as the *Ley Lerdo* which removed limits on landholding and defined as 'public' any land that was "not strictly delineated by legal titles." Under this law companies and individuals could 'denounce' any such lands as 'public' and thus acquire a stake in them. This not only applied to virgin lands, but also to village lands that were held by custom.¹⁰ The law led to a land grab on an unprecedented scale. By 1910 land concentration had reached the point where four-fifths of Mexico's rural communities and nearly half of the rural

⁷ Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution Volume I: Porfirians, Liberals, and Peasants*, I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 79-80.

⁸ Knight, 80.

⁹ John Womack Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 42.

¹⁰ Knight, 95; Bill Weinberg, *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico* (London: Verso, 2000), 44.

population were located within the boundaries of the hacienda.¹¹ Those villages which remained independent lived a precarious existence due to lack of land.¹²

It was these circumstances that sparked a rural uprising in 1910 within the state of Morelos. Land seizure had occurred prior to 1894, often when plots were left unguarded. However, the situation differed from conditions under *Ley Lerdo* since these seizures did not happen with any regularity. As historian Alan Knight stresses, “it was not really policy, and no one considered it irrevocable. Happily or not, social variety seemed eternal.” The new legislation made land seizure systematic, seriously jeopardizing previously recognized water and land rights in the process.¹³ Though this process occurred across the country, in Morelos the situation was inflamed by Governor Pablo Escandón who acted openly in planters’ favour while at the same time refusing to adopt even a pretence of addressing the concerns of the state’s agrarian communities. It took only the opposition campaign of exiled Liberal reformer Francisco Madero to embolden a peasant leader named Emiliano Zapata who came from the state’s most heavily armed pueblo, Villa de Alaya. Zapata rose up in rebellion in support of Madero.¹⁴ Díaz abdicated quickly, though Madero’s hopes of establishing a stable liberal democracy were soon dashed by his failure to address the agrarian issue.

On the eve of his rebellion against Díaz, Madero had drafted a manifesto known as the *Plan de San Luis Potosí*. Its main theme was denouncing the illegitimacy of Díaz’s regime. Yet among its provisions was a small clause that both denounced the law regarding untitled lands as well as promising restitution for any land acquired under these

¹¹ Ibid., 79, 95-96.

¹² Ibid., 96.

¹³ Womack, 43-44.

¹⁴ Ibid., 41, 52.

laws. Zapata had studied this clause carefully and it led him to support Madero's rebellion.¹⁵ Yet Madero had never envisioned a fundamental change in Díaz's economic policies. He merely believed that the greater liberty afforded by a representative liberal democracy would somehow address the problems that Díaz's policies had raised.¹⁶ In this Madero had completely failed to understand what had driven Zapata's army in Southern Morelos to support him. Scholars tend to agree that the two men had widely divergent ideas about what the revolution meant and should mean.¹⁷ Madero's stalling on the land issue eventually drove the two apart. However, Zapata still would not have rebelled if not for the provocations of certain remnants of the Porfirian establishment, particularly Brigadier General Victoriano Huerta, who marched his forces into Morelos several times in order to quell disturbances which he attributed to Zapata.¹⁸

The importance of land to Mexico's peasants was illustrated in the adoption of Zapata's cause by rebels outside of Morelos. In the weeks following Madero's inauguration as President, Zapata met with key followers on the hills near the Villa de Alaya. There, under the guidance of local schoolmaster Otilio Montaña, they drafted a manifesto known as the *Plan de Alaya*.¹⁹ The plan basically expressed the dissatisfaction of Zapata's followers with Madero's failure to make good on his promises regarding land. In it the Zapatistas vowed to restore not only those fields and lands seized from the villages, but also seize one third of any legitimately held lands from those proprietors that they deemed to be "monopolists."²⁰ Interestingly enough, the most important measure

¹⁵ Ibid., 70, 72.

¹⁶ Ian Jacobs, "Rancheros of Guerrero: the Figueroa Brothers and the Revolution," in Caudillo and Peasant in the Mexican Revolution, ed. D.A. Brading (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 77.

¹⁷ Jacobs, 79; Womack, 127.

¹⁸ Womack, 109.

¹⁹ Knight, 309.

²⁰ Knight, 310; Womack, 402-403.

mentioned in the plan was the protection of village autonomy from outside political interference. Zapatismo's guiding organizational principle was the free association of landholding villages. According to historian Alan Knight, the original Zapatista movement was fundamentally conservative, as were many agrarian rebellions of the time, in that it was reacting against the economic and social changes that were injurious to the traditional rural culture of the time.²¹ Upon signing the plan Zapata and his lieutenants formally declared themselves in rebellion against Madero's government.²² The Plan would not have had much significance outside of Morelos if not for the fact that at the same time Zapata carried out an armed uprising, the plan was circulating throughout the countryside of Mexico's southern and central states. It was in these areas that the plan gradually won the support of much of the rural populace, who had experienced deprivations similar to those in Morelos. As a result more and more of the rural population outside of Morelos joined the rebellion and declared themselves to be Zapatistas. The success of the Plan de Alaya in galvanizing Mexico's peasantry was such that rebels obtained the necessary strength to launch attacks on Mexico City's suburbs, and even seized the capital with the aid of the rebel armies of Francisco Villa from the North.²³

The volatility of the land issue was not lost on General Álvaro Obregón when he assumed the presidency in 1920. By then the Mexican government had changed hands five times. Even though Zapata was dead by then and in spite of the fact that the rebellion was on its last legs, the Mexican government still found it necessary to ally itself with the cause of land reform in order to maintain stability. Obregón's predecessor,

²¹ Knight, 310.

²² Knight, 310; Womack, 397, 126.

²³ Womack, 171-172, 217.

the populist general Venustiano Carranza had already taken steps to doing so in 1917 when he drafted a new constitution. In its twenty-seventh article, the constitution recognized the rights of villages to hold property as corporate bodies. In doing so the 1917 Constitution gave formal legal recognition to the land-holding practices of Mexico's rural population, which had previously been threatened by land seizures. Moreover, it allowed peasants to petition the government for land if they found they were in need of it. That Carranza had made this concession can be traced back to the lack of success that past Generals had experienced in relying on sheer force to quell the rebellion. Madero's inability to deal with Zapata's rebellion had led to his assassination and usurpation by General Huerta who felt that Madero had been too lenient on the rebel. Yet, Huerta's significantly more brutal measures had only inflamed the rebellion to the point where most of the state of Morelos was on Zapata's side. By the 1920s the necessity of conciliation with the rural masses was no longer a radical concept. Instead it became a tenet of orthodoxy for Mexico's political establishment.²⁴

Obregón's own contribution to land reform was to pass legislation in 1921 and 1922 which stipulated that definitive titles to land could only be granted presidential decree. This meant that Obregón and subsequent presidents eventually became closely identified with land reform.²⁵ Moreover, the new President explicitly praised land reform in public statements such as in a speech in March 1923 in which he stated "The men of Morelos are, without a doubt, the best representatives of the ideals...of the Revolution and that is the agrarian ideal." Only a few years earlier even Obregón had viewed the

²⁴ Womack, 273; Knight, 174-175.

²⁵ Lynn Stephen, *Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 39.

Zapatistas as mere bandits.²⁶ Obregón's successor, Plutarco Calles, also found it necessary to identify with the cause of land reform as well as the figure of Emiliano Zapata. While campaigning against Obregón in 1924 for the Presidency, he declared before Zapata's tomb that "this revolutionary program of Zapata, agrarian reform, is mine."²⁷ As President, Calles had the Mexican state play a greater role in commemorating the Revolution, even as he sought to limit land reform to attract more foreign capital. However, Obregón's modest reforms had negligible effect in the Mexican state of Chiapas where land holders had defeated the state's revolutionaries and thus could avoid land reform merely by declaring themselves loyal to Obregón.²⁸ As a result, land reform came slowly to the region.

Before moving any further on the matter of land reform, the structure of the Mexican post-revolutionary state needs to be briefly examined. Up until 2002, Mexico was essentially a one party state maintained by electoral fraud and cooptation of opposition groups. Initially this system was a product of necessity in order to overcome post-revolutionary factionalism. It was inaugurated by Obregón's successor, President Plutarco Calles,²⁹ whose solution to the precarious stability of the Republic was to unite the disparate revolutionary groups under the aegis of a single political party. Factionalism was still rife after the revolution and the assassination of Obregón in the summer of 1928 only served to exacerbate these divisions. Calles handled the situation by formally stepping down in December of 1928 and handing the Presidency to Emilio

²⁶ Thomas Benjamin, La Revolución: Mexico's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth, and History (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 70, 62; Weinberg, 55.

²⁷ Benjamin, 70; Stephen, 30.

²⁸ George A. Collier and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello, Basta! Land & the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas (Oakland: Food First Books, 1998), 28-29; Neil Harvey, The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle For Land and Democracy (Durham: Duke University, 1998), 54.

²⁹ Stephen, 39.

Portes Gil, a politician who was acceptable both to his own followers and those of Óbregon. (Even as Calles retained personal power behind the scenes.) In the following year both sides united as the National Revolutionary Party (*Partido Nacional Revolucionaria* - PNR).³⁰ Ironically these achievements were only fully consolidated by the man who unseated Calles. In 1934, former revolutionary general Lázaro Cárdenas was elected to the Presidency and rechristened the PNR as the Mexican Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolución Mexicana* - PRM). The PRM was then reorganized along corporative lines so that soldiers and peasants played a greater role in it, while the power of generals was de-emphasized in favour of bureaucrats. At the end of his term Cárdenas stepped down rather than retain any personal power. This set the pattern for transfer of office and power that was followed by the ruling party until 2001.³¹ The PRM was renamed for the last time in 1942 as the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionaria Institucional* – PRI).³² However, Cárdenas' importance in consolidating the power of the one party state lay not in reorganizing the ruling party, but in his social policies towards Mexico's rural populace.

Lázaro Cárdenas had a greater impact upon the Mexican political landscape because he carried out land reform more extensively than any President before or after him. As a result, he won for the PRI government the loyalty of Mexico's rural populace. During his presidency, some 17.9 million hectares of land, about twice the amount distributed by all previous revolutionary governments, was redistributed from stagnant commercial estates to approximately 810,000 peasants. This land was often held in

³⁰ Ibid., 93-94.

³¹ Ibid., 94.

³² Weinberg, 57.

common under a village in an organizational form known as an *ejido*.³³ Cárdenas also attempted to promote collectively worked *ejidos* in order to use them for large-scale agricultural production.³⁴ This redistribution of land broke up half of Mexico's *haciendas* and gave much of their land over to *ejidos*. Anthropologist George Collier has noted that because of these actions the government was able to win a great deal of popular support if only by symbolically positioning itself as the champion of the peasants and the poor.³⁵ Cárdenas, also created an organization for agricultural workers known as the National Campesino Confederation (CNC) which *ejidatarios* had to join by law. The CNC was built out of the surviving armed peasant organizations of the revolution and was employed to ensure the votes and the loyalty of the peasants for the government.³⁶ One example of how the CNC was employed comes from the Agrarian Rehabilitation Plan (PRA) of 1984, where the government of Chiapas purchased just over 80,000 hectares of land to turn over to 159 peasant communities. However, any community not affiliated with the PRI's organizations were entirely excluded from those benefits.³⁷ In this way Cárdenas established measures for ensuring the loyalty of peasants by selectively providing the benefits of agrarian reform to loyal partisans.

Having established the national historical context for land reform in Mexico it is now necessary to focus on how these developments played out in the state of Chiapas. Initially land reform made little impact in the state due to both the aforementioned success of the state's landholders against the revolutionaries, as well as their ability to

³³ Nora Louise Hamilton, "Mexico: The Limits of State Autonomy," *Latin American Perspectives* 2, no.2 (Summer, 1975): 90; Benjamin, 94; Collier and Quaratiello, 32.

³⁴ Louise Hamilton, 91.

³⁵ Collier and Quaratiello, 31.

³⁶ Weinberg, 57.

³⁷ Collier and Quaratiello, 51-52.

exploit loopholes in the agrarian reform law by subdividing their estates among close relatives. This practice ended when Cárdenas' candidate for governor, Efraín Gutiérrez, won the gubernatorial election due to support won from indigenous municipalities. This support had largely been the work of his campaign manager, Erasto Urbina. Urbina's humble background, agrarian populism, and knowledge of commercial contacts between ladino merchants and indigenous communities were crucial in securing Gutiérrez his electoral victory.³⁸ Urbina was rewarded for his service by being appointed director of a new agency to handle indigenous affairs and set up a union known as the Syndicate of Indigenous Workers (STI). All workers hired to work in the north or along the coast were required to join the organization as well as sign a contract with plantation agents. This assured a legal minimum wage for coffee workers and treatment in accordance with the standards established by Cárdenas' ministers.³⁹

As elsewhere in Mexico, this policy provided benefits to members of government approved agrarian organizations and helped to ensure peasant loyalty. Urbina's efforts went even further by redistributing a considerable amount of land in the coffee-producing Soconusco region of Chiapas⁴⁰ which ensured that peasant loyalties lay primarily with the state and not their social class. Consequently peasants struggled with each other to maintain the favour of the government rather than with those who were potential competitors for land.⁴¹ The significance of this achievement cannot be overstated. Prior to the revolution, most indigenous communities in Mexico regarded the federal government as something remote and almost imaginary at best. At worst, they regarded

³⁸ Wasserstrom, 162.

³⁹ Ibid, 163-164.

⁴⁰ Weinberg, 165-166.

⁴¹ Collier and Quaratiello, 32.

the government as an “arbitrary oppressor.” This view was partly fostered by the very local world view of Mexico’s indigenous people⁴² something ethnographer John Watanabe observed while studying the inhabitants of a Mayan town in Guatemala, who had an assumed moral superiority towards outsiders, be they Mayan or Ladinos. Watanabe also discovered that those Maya and Ladinos living within the community regarded each other with wary ambivalence and rarely mixed.⁴³ That Urbina could secure the loyalty of Chiapas’ rural communities to the Mexican state illustrates how successful agrarian reform was as a tool for ensuring political loyalty in the countryside.

And while Cárdenas’ reforms refashioned the political landscape in Mexico they did not significantly change the socioeconomic position of the average indigenous peasant. At the end of Cárdenas’ administration half the *latifundia* were still intact while half of Mexico’s peasants remained landless.⁴⁴ Furthermore, though Cárdenas emphasized large scale commercial production in the *ejidos*, his policies kept them dependent upon the Mexican state. The Ejidal Banks that he set up to supply *ejidos* provided not only credit, but organised production and sales of harvests, as well as representing the ejido to the local and state authorities. Yet this institutionalized dependence in *ejidos* on the state for resources and planning when the state would not always act in their interests.⁴⁵ Cárdenas’ reforms still had a paternalistic quality to them. However, even if the Mexican government had approached the matter differently it lacked the necessary money to properly capitalize most *ejidos* at the time. As a result the

⁴² Knight, 6.

⁴³ John M. Watanabe, Maya Saints and Souls in a Changing World (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 19.

⁴⁴ Louise Hamilton, 90-91.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 91.

necessary irrigation to develop *ejidos* into viable agricultural ventures was lacking.⁴⁶ Moreover, however radical his measures may have seemed, Cárdenas still pulled back, sharply curtailing land reform in 1937 in response to negative reaction by large landholders and the middle class.⁴⁷ In the end Cárdenas' reforms never entirely changed the social and economic situation of Mexico's peasants. They were still kept in a dependent position both as a result of the financial and political limits of the land reform and because they were used as a tool for political control.

In the case of Chiapas, particularly in the state's eastern half, the peasantry was in a more disadvantaged position than those in the rest of the country. While Cárdenas had made significant expropriations elsewhere in the country, in Chiapas his representatives had mostly turned over marginal lands that had been appropriated from indigenous communities by highland ranchers in the 19th century.⁴⁸ Whatever Gutiérrez had planned to achieve, land reform in Chiapas always seemed carefully designed to avoid antagonizing landowners. One of the most telling instances was agrarian reform in the coffee producing region of Soconusco where the opposition of *hacendados* quickly subsided because expropriation under the agrarian law did not include their processing facilities or their best equipment. Moreover, there was no major program to provide the *ejidos* with the equipment needed to process their crop for sale. Therefore, they remained dependent upon the *haciendas* to purchase their coffee crops in order to prepare them for sale. Meanwhile, large landholders could easily avoid incurring the costs of growing coffee under this system. Land reform in the Soconusco primarily benefited private

⁴⁶ Albert L. Michaels, "The Crisis of Cardenismo," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 2, no. 1 (May, 1970): 60; Louise-Hamilton, 88-89.

⁴⁷ Michaels, 76-77.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

landowners since it provided the *latifundia* with a protective buffer of underproductive *ejidos* whose lack of capital contributed to the *latifundia* prosperity.⁴⁹ Once Cárdenas had departed from office in 1940, his successors promptly dropped his reforms, as well as reversing several of them. As a result, the STI devolved into a minor branch of the state bureaucracy and lost its power to organize plantations workers. It ended up effectively becoming a hiring agency for the coffee estates. Meanwhile, landholders began dealing with militancy among labourers by importing less militant workers from Guatemala.⁵⁰

However, this did not spell the end of agrarian reform in Chiapas as it still proved necessary to deal with subsequent disturbances. Due to Chiapas' rising population peasants were applying once more for land under the agrarian reform laws by the 1950s. Again the government turned to less valuable lands that lay outside of the plantations. As soon as the population had outstripped these new parcels in the 1960s they once again filed claims for land. This time they petitioned for parcels on the more valuable lands of the commercial estates. Claimants found it necessary to invade these lands in order to lay claim to them since the agrarian law only applied to lands within seven kilometres of the communities. Landowners responded by calling for the government to stop the invasions while at the same time meeting the invaders with armed force. Consequently, these land invasions nearly brought certain areas of rural Mexico to a state of guerrilla warfare.⁵¹ Prior to this the country had experienced relatively few serious political upheavals since Cárdenas, yet now that population was outstripping available land, Mexico broke out into in conflict again. Given the history of the revolution and the land conflicts of the 1960s in Chiapas, the political stability of Mexico in the twentieth century seems to have been

⁴⁹ Wasserstrom, 164, 169-170.

⁵⁰ Louise Hamilton, 91; Wasserstrom. 167.

⁵¹ Collier and Quaratiello, 48-49.

inextricably linked with how the government managed the need for land among the rural population. In the 1960s the country was faced with armed conflict over a lack of land with which to satisfy the needs of its rural population. It was in this context that the Mexican government would yet again return to agrarian reform to quell unrest in the countryside in the 1970s.

Before dealing this matter, it is necessary to finishing illustrating the importance of agrarian reform to Mexico's political stability by showing the government's abandonment of this policy triggered the 1994 Zapatista uprising. The 1980s opened with Mexico in economic crisis. The country had experienced an oil boom during the 1970s which led the government to borrow heavily from foreign countries to finance a variety of development projects. When oil prices abruptly declined, Mexico found itself heavily in debt.⁵² By 1982 the nation's foreign debt was some \$82 billion. The IMF offered to help on the condition that Mexico adopt a structural adjustment program which involved, among other measures, reducing restrictions on foreign investment, privatizing state-owned enterprises, cutting social spending, and freezing minimum wages.⁵³ In effect this meant abandoning the corporatist state⁵⁴ which had been based on the use of social programs as a sop for popular discontent. The PRI's economic reorientation culminated in the election of Carlos Salinas de Gortari as President of Mexico in 1988. Salinas not only stepped up the IMF's restructuring program, but on 7 November 1991 he revised Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, the very basis of Mexico's agrarian reform. One of the most significant changes he made was to expunge section 10 of Article 27. The section had read, "Those nuclei of population who lack *ejidos* or cannot

⁵² Nash, 79.

⁵³ Wienberg, 62.

⁵⁴ Nash, 79.

obtain restitution by lack of title, [...] shall be equipped with lands and water sufficient for those constituting [the ejido].”⁵⁵ With its deletion Salinas had effectively ended agrarian reform. The Constitution no longer guaranteed that *ejidos* would be furnished with land when they were in need of it. Moreover, section 4 of Article 27 was rewritten so that commercial properties could acquire rural lands and that ejidatarios could transfer titles to the ejido land between each other. In practice this was taken to mean that ejidal land could be sold, rented, and mortgaged.⁵⁶ Salinas and his advisors’ made these changes believing that the ejido sector would never be competitive on the world market and that by opening the way to their privatization, these lands would receive investment and bring Mexico’s peasantry into a modern agricultural sector.⁵⁷

Contrary to Salinas’ prediction though, most observers have claimed that the reform of Article 27 led to EZLN’s 1994 uprising. During the time of the Article’s revision, the National Indian Institute (INI) had warned that changing the agrarian law in this fashion would threaten Mexico’s political and social stability. The institute’s reasoning for this was that about 360,000 hectares of land held by ejidatarios would be in dispute and that less than two-thirds of the *ejidos* had the potential to develop capitalist enterprises.⁵⁸ From this it reasoned that the hopes of Salinas’ and his advisors were not feasible. These predictions are supported by the Zapatistas’ own explanations for the

⁵⁵ N.A., N.D., “Constitución de México 1917 – Título I,” <http://constitucion.rediris.es/principal/constituciones-mexico1917_1.htm#t1c1> (22 November 2004); N.A., 28 January 1992, “Artículo 27,” <<http://www.cddhcu.gob.mx/leyinfo/refcns/pdfsrcs/27.pdf>>; N.A., 27 September 2004, “Constitución Política de Estados Unidos Mexicanos,” <<http://www.cddhcu.gob.mx/leyinfo/pdf/1.pdf>> (22 November 2004); Weinberg, 67.

⁵⁶ N.A., N.D., “Constitución de México 1917 – Título I,” <http://constitucion.rediris.es/principal/constituciones-mexico1917_1.htm#t1c1> (22 November 2004); N.A., 28 January 1992, “Artículo 27,” <<http://www.cddhcu.gob.mx/leyinfo/refcns/pdfsrcs/27.pdf>>; “Constitución Política de Estados Unidos Mexicanos,” 27 September 2004, <<http://www.cddhcu.gob.mx/leyinfo/pdf/1.pdf>> (22 November 2004); Weinberg, 67.

⁵⁷ Collier and Quaratiello, 88.

⁵⁸ Nash, 82.

uprising. For example, the Third Declaration claimed that the political crisis in south-eastern Mexico resulting from the Zapatista rebellion demonstrated “the government’s incapacity to resolve, at their roots, the political and social problems of Mexico.”⁵⁹

Though the Declaration never mentions Article 27 explicitly, it is clear that this statement is a reference the problems of land distribution that have continually plagued Mexico.

This impression is reinforced by a 2003 letter written by Subcomandante Marcos on July 25 in which he claims that Salinas’ revision of Article 27 led to a drastic increase in the poverty of many of Chiapas’ indigenous communities. In the letter, Marcos describes how, following the changes to the law, he received frequent reports from other Zapatista villages of the deaths of children under five and their mothers. Moreover, he received these reports daily and without relent.⁶⁰ This may be why Marcos described the Zapatista decision to go to war as a choice between dying quietly from starvation or dying by military force while drawing attention to the plight of Southeastern Chiapas.⁶¹ Marcos’ account of the decision to go to war on the part of the EZLN’s comandantes also supports this explanation. At the end of January 1993 the Clandestine Committee told him that they were going to take up arms against the government. When Marcos expressed his doubts about the feasibility of the operation he was told by the Committee, “We don’t want to know what’s happening in the rest of world. We are dying and we have to ask the people.”⁶²

⁵⁹ EZLN, “The Third Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle,” in The Zapatista Reader, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder ‘s Mouth Press, 2002), 235.

⁶⁰ Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, “Chiapas, the Thirteenth Stele - Part Two, A Death,” in Ya Basta! The Years of the Zapatista Uprising: Writings of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, ed. Žiga Vodovik (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 595.

⁶¹ Marcos, “Chiapas, the Thirteenth Stele – Part Two,” 596.

⁶² Neil Harvey, The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle For Land and Democracy (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 197.

Still the reform of Article 27 should not overshadow that in some ways the rebellion was a long time coming given the way in which independent political organizing had been handled by the PRI. Prior to the EZLN, Chiapas already had a considerable history of independent political organizing, though many of these efforts were stifled by military repression. For example, the EZLN was originally a regional network of armed self-defence units set up in response to repression by the military.⁶³ Even the relatively successful Unión de Uniones (UU), which managed to gain a suspension on eviction orders against twenty-six *ejidos* through peaceful protest, had to contend with violence against its members such as the violent evictions of over 100 UU supporters from their homes by CNC supporters.⁶⁴ Another example is that of the community of Venustiano Carranza, which had spent 1974 to 1976 engaged in largely peaceful political activity in order to secure the authorization of the state government to have the community's communal land officially demarcated. However, their leader, Martínez Villatoro, ended up being assassinated. When the community went after the suspected assassins the military invaded and arrested their entire leadership. Consequently, the residents of Venustiano Carranza came to regard the government as an enemy rather than a neutral arbiter.⁶⁵ In many ways Venustiano Carranza's change in attitude towards the government is as dramatic as the shift in attitude by Mexico's farming communities in the 1930s when the government adopted agrarian reform. However, the government's violence against the community served only to turn Venustiano Carranza's inhabitants against it, as it had with the member communities of the EZLN.

⁶³ Ibid., 165.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 86-87.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 101-103.

Still matters of political activism such as those detailed above cannot be separated from the EZLN's concerns over agrarian reform. Venustiano Carranza's activities revolved around ensuring the integrity of their communal land while the original rebellion by Zapata had occurred because the state government of Morelos was openly acting in favour of plantation owners in land disputes. This may explain why the EZLN's political program is oriented around decentralized, local forms of government, much like that of Zapata's. Both the Third and Fourth Declarations of the Lacandón Jungle make numerous references to recognizing indigenous culture, the failure of the federal government to do so, as well as the skewed distribution of wealth in the country and the hunger of Chiapas' indigenous people.⁶⁶ The EZLN's claims that these problems can only be solved if the government is willing to recognize indigenous peoples' own forms of social, political, and cultural organization. Neither declaration explains exactly what this means outside of the Third Declaration's references to indigenous people having the right to 'autonomy.'⁶⁷

In practice 'autonomy' seems to refer to the Zapatistas' Autonomous Municipalities. Conceptually the Autonomous Municipalities appear to be political units where decision making is devolved down to the local level as much as possible while the EZLN is forced to consult them on their decisions. Marcos refers to the principle involved as "obeying the governed." Following this principle, in the Autonomous Municipality system local officials could be recalled at will if they were seen as failing in their duties. Furthermore, officers in the EZLN's command could not hold any local

⁶⁶ Harvey, 238; EZLN, "The Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle," in The Zapatista Reader, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder 's Mouth Press, 2002), 241, 245, 248.

⁶⁷ EZLN, "The Third Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle," 236, 238.

offices⁶⁸ apparently to prevent domination of local politics by a military organization given that Marcos has referred to the EZLN as an “undemocratic” element in direct community democracy.⁶⁹ Adopting such locally oriented political structures seems to be tied up with the EZLN’s experiences dealing with the Mexican government and land reform. In preparing to revise Article 27, Salinas employed the CNC among other organizations in order to propagandize for the reform. Yet June Nash claims that Salinas consistently ignored the indigenous sectors of Mexican society. Much of the opposition to the reform came from independent peasant organizations that had large indigenous memberships such as the Popular Union or the Independent Centre of Agricultural Workers and Campesinos, who maintained protests throughout 1991, even after the Bill was signed on 1 December of that year.⁷⁰ In this context, the locally-oriented nature of political organization for the Zapatista territories is a response to the Mexican government’s lack of concern for their own socio-economic needs. However, Marcos claims that this is not the case and in fact the direct democracy of the EZLN’s organization came out of practices that the communities already had in place as well as the necessity of listening to their needs in order to accomplish anything.⁷¹ Marcos also claims, in the same interview, that the situation of the indigenous communities led to a way of political organization concerned primarily with the “survival of the collective.”⁷²

⁶⁸ Subcomandante Marcos, “Chiapas, the Thirteenth Stele – Part Five, A History,” in *Ya Basta! The Years of the Zapatista Uprising: Writings of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos*, ed. Žiga Vodovik (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 612-613.

⁶⁹ Marcos, “A History,” 613.

⁷⁰ Nash, 81-82.

⁷¹ Infoshop Berkeley, 11 May 1994, “Interview With Subcomandante Marcos,” <<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/anmarin.html>> (1 December 2004).

⁷² Ibid.

Chapter Two: Conservation International and the Zapatistas, the Conflict of Conservation and Culture

The poverty of south-eastern Chiapas's indigenous people, as well as the EZLN's struggle against the government to maintain its own political norms, furnish the backdrop for the dispute with Conservation International (CI) over of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The conflict's roots lie in the Mexican government encouraging the settlers to colonize the Lacandón Jungle in the early 1970s while simultaneously bowing to pressure from conservationists to protect the jungle, both for the sake of the jungle itself and the Lacandón Indians who reside in it. Conservation International's involvement in the region began before the rebellion when it purchased some debt from the Mexican government in exchange for the government devoting certain resources to conservation efforts in the region. The nature reserve model that CI supports has been criticized for ignoring both the politics of the areas upon which the model is imposed and the needs of its inhabitants, a feature which seems to have an impact on how CI approached the situation in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The Zapatistas emphasize their former rights under the Agrarian Reform law and their belief that they have been wronged by the Mexican government. Meanwhile CI stresses the need to protect the reserve and create ecologically friendly business ventures for some of its inhabitants. Neither party seems to address each other's rather divergent goals. This is especially true of CI which insists on trying to execute its conservation efforts, including relocating settlers, in a politically tense region while ignoring not only key elements of the conflict, but other possible causes for deforestation as well. This is due to the fact that CI is not really concerned with the needs of local populations so much as protecting natural areas

according to its own criteria. Consequently it cannot cooperate with the EZLN whose political agenda is driven by the need for its indigenous communities to have control over their own land.

The dispute's history began when the government resorted to land reform in order to quell popular unrest. In 1970, Luis Echeverría became President of the Mexican Republic just two years after the Mexican army killed an estimated three hundred protestors in the Plaza de Tres Culturas in the centre of Tlatelolco. The victims had been a part of a series of protests against the PRI's one-party rule as well as the extravagance of the upcoming 1968 Olympic Games when most Mexicans lived in poverty. The government had been eager to end the demonstrations in order to prevent them from disrupting the upcoming Olympics.⁷³ Since he held the position of Minister of the Interior at the time, Echeverría received a great deal of the blame for the massacre and thus he sought to improve his image through the use of populist measures after he became President. As a consequence of this, public expenditure rose to twenty-eight percent of the GDP during Echeverría's administration as more money was devoted to social programs.⁷⁴ This rise in public spending was also a response to a spate of invasions of large estates in central and northern Mexico by landless peasants.⁷⁵ The President tried to stop these invasions by opening up unpopulated land for settlement in the state of Chiapas. Much of this land lay in one of Mexico's last remaining frontiers: the tropical rainforest of the Lacandón Jungle.

⁷³ Collier and Quaratiello, 42-43; Benjamin, 159; Stephen 113; Weinberg, 60.

⁷⁴ June Nash, Mayan Visions: The Quest For Autonomy In An Age of Globalization, (New York : Routledge, 2001), 79.

⁷⁵ Collier and Quaratiello, 43, 48-49.

The Lacandón had already served as a source of land for those families who had received land in the 1930s and 1940s, but who had outgrown their plots in the 1950s. These families had responded to the situation by either working on estates in the central Grijalva Valley and the Soconusco or looking for land to colonize in eastern Chiapas forests.⁷⁶ When a new wave of colonization came in the 1970s, the government gave settlers incentives such as fifty hectares of land, cattle credit, and a promise that the state would purchase any wood they cut to settle in the jungle.⁷⁷

However, as the jungle was being colonized, Echeverría ended up vacillating on his colonization policy in order to offer concessions to environmentalists. This shift in policy was motivated by the fact that by the 1970s the world's scientific community was beginning to notice the destruction of the forest by slash-and-burn colonization and how this activity was endangering the previously isolated Lacandón Maya, the last lowland Mayan forest culture.⁷⁸ Thanks to international pressure by conservationists and the advocacy of Swiss naturalist Gertrude Duby Blom on behalf of the Lacandones, a Presidential decree was issued in 1971 granting 688,000 hectares of land to the heads of 66 Lacandón Indian families. The grant's size was dictated by the Lacandones supposedly requiring large areas of the forest in order to practice their traditional way of life. However, some of this land had already been settled by about a dozen Tzeltal families who had set up about five communities in 1934, effectively rendering some 200,000 settlers squatters on their own lands.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁷ Collier and Quaratiello, 43, 37; Nash, 110.

⁷⁸ Weinberg, 102.

⁷⁹ Nash, 110, Weinberg, 102-103.

The government's creation of a nature reserve in the central-west jungle only further complicated the situation. An official decree issued on 12 January 1978 established the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve.⁸⁰ The reserve was covered under the Federal Law of Ecological Equilibrium and Protection of the Environment (Ley General de Equilibrio Ecológico y la Protección al Ambiente - LGEE) which provided legislation for establishing protected natural areas in order to preserve biodiversity. This included provisions for regulating the possession, control and use of land in the protected areas. These provisions also prevented the government from recognizing any new land claims in protected areas.⁸¹ According to the Ricardo Flores Magón Municipality and an article written by the Chiapas' Independent Media Centre, the establishment of the reserve invalidated many existent land claims by declaring them illegal.⁸² Both sources claim that a full thirty percent of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve falls outside of the jungle. As a result its boundaries needlessly affect the land tenure of hundreds more indigenous communities.⁸³

Conservation International became involved in the matter in 1991 when it purchased \$4 million of Mexico's foreign debt in exchange for the government spending nearly \$2.6 million on preservation programs for the Lacandón. Many of these funds were earmarked for a research station in the reserve devoted to studying the jungle's

⁸⁰ Chiapas Independent Media Centre, 30 May 2003, "Montes Azules," <<http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/news/030530.html>> (12 November 2004); Nash, 110.

⁸¹ Chiapas Independent Media Centre, 30 May 2003, "Montes Azules," <<http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/news/030530.html>> (13 November 2004); Federale Gobierno de Mexico, n.d., "Ley General del Equilibrio Ecológico y la Protección al Ambiente" <<http://www.economia.gob.mx/?P=1065>> (16 November 2004).

⁸² Chiapas Independent Media Centre, 30 May 2003, "Montes Azules," <<http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net/news/030530.html>> (16 November 2004); Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (20 October, 2004).

⁸³ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (1 November, 2004).

shrinking collection of species.⁸⁴ As a consequence CI has ended up clashing with the Zapatistas over the communities within the reserve.

Since the uprising of 1994, there has been a new influx of settlers into the reserve; CI has been attempting to relocate them to areas outside of the reserve with the aid of the Mexican government.⁸⁵ According to CI, the jungle's top soils are rich in nutrients, yet relatively thin since the tropical climate causes organic matter to decay rapidly. This means that nutrients are quickly recycled back into the forest canopy. If an area is cleared for farmland the soil is depleted after one or two years of intense productivity and the farmers are forced to push deeper into the forest.⁸⁶ As a result CI claims that colonization poses a threat to the forest's integrity and seeks to relocate the communities. However, more than half of the communities within the reserve whose presence has been deemed illegal are Zapatista supporters and the EZLN has explicitly stated that it will oppose any attempts to remove the settlers.⁸⁷ According to Bill Weinberg, the Indian communities within the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve are among the poorest in Chiapas⁸⁸ which may explain the level of bitterness that communities such as Ricardo Flores Magón have directed at the Mexican government's concessions to the Lacandón

⁸⁴ Weinberg, 103.

⁸⁵ Associated Press, 21 November 2004, "Buscaran expulsar a extranjeros de Chiapas," <<http://www.economista.com.mx/online4.nsf/c08dae3ee379ed28862568ea000e0b0c/50ae9aa5b7a1717086256e3200071bbc!OpenDocument>> (20 October 2004); Ross Wehner, 17 December 2000, "Rebels in the Rain Forest Mexico's peace talks with Zapatistas complicated by fate of fragile environment," <<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2000/12/17/MN176182.DTL>> (20 October 2003); Jim Wyss, 26 June 2003, "Mexico Coalition Launches Strategy To Stop Destruction of Country's Richest Forest," <http://www.conservation.org/xp/news/press_releases/2003/062603.xml> (20 October 2004).

⁸⁶ Weinberg, 104.

⁸⁷ Ross Wehner, 17 December 2000, "Rebels in the Rain Forest Mexico's peace talks with Zapatistas complicated by fate of fragile environment," <<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2000/12/17/MN176182.DTL>> (20 October 2003); Jim Wyss, 26 June 2003, "Mexico Coalition Launches Strategy To Stop Destruction of Country's Richest Forest," <http://www.conservation.org/xp/news/press_releases/2003/062603.xml> (20 October 2004).

⁸⁸ Weinberg, 79.

people and environmentalists. After all, Subcomandante Marcos has explicitly stated that the EZLN were driven to armed action by hunger. His claims are reinforced by Weinberg's observation that the poverty of these parts of the forest has made these areas a fertile recruiting ground for the EZLN.⁸⁹ This tension between the claims of the environmentalists and the needs of the poor is partly what makes the dispute so polarizing for the actors involved. For example the World Wildlife Fund signed a petition in 2000 calling for the removal of settlers which it later dropped due to attacks from the left, usually a traditional ally of conservation groups. It now refuses to talk about the issue.⁹⁰

Yet whether the conflict is purely between the demands of the environment and the demands of peasants is not so certain. It is worth considering the research of geographer Juanita Sundberg on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating within the Maya Biosphere Reserve, located in the Petén area of Guatemala. Besides CI's reports and criticisms of it from Zapatista partisans, there is scant information regarding how CI operates in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. Even the Zapatistas themselves have not directly commented on CI's work there so much as the actions of the government. Due to the polarization of the issue, it seems unlikely that either side will prove to be entirely reliable in their accounts. Sundberg's writings on the other hand are useful for assessing the organization's policies and attitudes towards conservation since CI is one of the NGOs operating in the reserve, and the Maya Biosphere Reserve's situation is very similar to that of Montes Azules. The Maya Biosphere Reserve was created in 1990 following the election of Guatemala's first civilian President in fifteen

⁸⁹ Harvey, 191.

⁹⁰ Mark Stevenson, 4 August 2002, "Tropical Rain Forest Sprouts Battleground," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=13851>> (28 November 2004).

years, with approximately 1.6 million hectares in lowland forest devoted to it.⁹¹

Between, 1970 and 1986 the forest cover of the Petén had shrunk by about twenty-five percent.

This was accompanied by an ongoing expansion of the forest's population from 25,000 in the early 1960s to 300,000 in the mid 1990s.⁹² The circumstances of this deforestation, immigration into the forest, appear to be similar to those of Montes Azules, particularly and about half of the reserve's population are Maya. Like the Lacandón, deforestation is brought about by a combination of logging, farming, cattle ranching, and oil exploitation.⁹³ More than thirty NGOs are involved in the Reserve, including CI. Prior to 1990, the Petén forest's integrity and use was regulated by the military who did not generally try to change livelihood practices. The establishment of the reserve criminalized many traditional livelihood practices such as hunting, keeping certain animals as pets, and slash and burn agriculture.⁹⁴ As such, the regulations of the park seem to differ little from those in Montes Azules.

In her research, Sundberg has observed that the biosphere reserve model tends to ignore local political settings. This is because the organizations minding these reserves tend to view the landscape through a scientific viewpoint which seeks to examine the world according to a set of external, "non-human" values free of bias and value judgements.⁹⁵ The result of this is that NGOs operating in the reserve tend to ignore and disrupt local cultural and social structures in order to promote leaders who favour their

⁹¹ Juanita Sundberg, "Strategies For Authenticity, Space, and Place in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén," *Conference of Latin American Geographers* 24 (1998), 4.

⁹² Sundberg, "Strategies For Authenticity," 5.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 5-6.

⁹⁵ Juanita Sundberg, 1 November 1997, "Conservation in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Peten Guatemala," <<http://www.planeta.com/planeta/97/1197maya.html>> (15 April 2005); Sundberg, 2-3.

policies. Sundberg claims that this ends up dividing communities between those who use conservation rhetoric to undermine community norms and those who seek to uphold a particular community-oriented culture that does not reflect CI's imposed conservation ethic.⁹⁶ This critique is mirrored by the observations of anthropologist Charles Clark, who also examined the issue of deforestation and the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Clark found that NGOs tend only to focus upon populations currently living within the reserve, but do not bother to address the concerns of those who might need land in the region.⁹⁷ In Guatemala's case this need is extreme because of skewed concentrations of landholding which were exacerbated by authoritarian rule in the country from 1954 into the 1980s.⁹⁸ Colonization of the Petén began in the 1970s as a result of the escalation of the civil war which forced many of the Q'echí Maya off of their land.⁹⁹ In many ways the Guatemalan experience mirrors that of Chiapas in that land invasions were fuelled by both a lack of land elsewhere in the country and military repression.

Both Sundberg and Clark's criticisms of how the NGOs deal with conservation issues are also substantiated in the origins and effects of the earliest nature reserves. Yellowstone National Park, for example, was created after the American military had removed the Miwok people from their land in the Yosemite Valley. In keeping with the establishment of the park, for more than a century Native American presence was only referenced in the park's publications as being "early 'visitors'" to Yellowstone¹⁰⁰ even though the area had been inhabited by the Miwok shortly before to the park's

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Charles Clark, "Land Tenure Delegitimation and Social Mobility in Tropical Petén, Guatemala," Human Organization 59, no.4 (2000): 426.

⁹⁸ Clark: 419, 424.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 419-420.

¹⁰⁰ Neumann, 30.

establishment. This revisionist history substantiates historian Roderik P. Neumann's observation that nature parks are designed according to ideas that seek to remove all evidence of human agency from the land.¹⁰¹ He developed this explanation studying the history of Mount Meru National Park in Tanzania which was established by the English colonial government because of pressure from English conservationists. The conservationists only permitted people to live within the forest of Mount Meru if they were considered to be a part of the park's 'fauna.' This designation was based on popular Victorian stereotypes of "primitive" Africans who fit into the natural landscape. As a result, the Pygmies residing within the boundaries of Albert National Park¹⁰² This is in keeping with Sundberg and Clark's descriptions of how CI views the inhabitants of the park only in relation to how it sees the landscape of the park. In all of the above instances, conservationists viewed the landscape as being 'natural' or 'pristine' in that it was free of human contact. Yet in all of these cases – Yosemite, Mount Meru, and Petén – human activity had already shaped the environments that these conservationists wished to protect. Therefore their attempts to severely restrict human activity actually threatened the environments they sought to preserve. This chapter will consider these points when examining why CI has failed to cooperate with the EZLN.

How these respective actors view their world is especially important because much of the situation is defined by the greatly divergent viewpoints of Conservation International and the EZLN. The Zapatista National Liberation Army's political perspective is shaped by a view of Mexican history which emphasizes rebellion and marginalization. This view is defined by the opening statement of the First Declaration

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰² Ibid., 125, 128.

of the Lacandon Jungle. It reads: “We are a product of 500 years of struggle.” The Zapatistas identify this struggle with historical events such as slavery, Mexico’s war for independence, foreign military incursions, and Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship.¹⁰³ In other words the Zapatistas see themselves as being a part of a continuous struggle against oppression. Likewise the declaration refers to the PRI’s long hold on the government as a “70 year dictatorship,” which they then link to Mexico’s past by identifying the PRI with the same political establishments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that once opposed the rebel priest Hidalgo and later Emiliano Zapata.¹⁰⁴ The most striking feature of this document is that it explicitly acknowledges the role that history plays in the Zapatistas’ view of Mexico’s political situation. In the Fourth Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle the organization declares that “our fight is for history, and the evil government proposes to erase our history.”¹⁰⁵ These statements suggest that the EZLN’s cause is as much about preserving a version of history which it favours – in this case a one of political rebellion - as it is about fighting oppression. By following the line of thinking it becomes evident that the primary foundation of Zapatista identity is a history of rebellion in Mexico. It is this historical perspective which dominates the Zapatistas’ understanding of the conflict in Montes Azules.

This is also what makes Conservation International’s role in Montes Azules troublesome. CI’s actions are not informed by a moral-historical perspective as the EZLN is, but by the scientific approach that was described earlier. It states on its website

¹⁰³ EZLN, “First Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002), 217.

¹⁰⁴ EZLN, “First Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle,” 217-218; EZLN, “Third Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002), 234.

¹⁰⁵ EZLN, “Fourth Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002), 241.

that its purpose is to address the threats to biodiversity across the world due to rising human populations and increasing resource demands of industrial nations.¹⁰⁶ CI's statements on its work in Mexico reflect this concern by detailing how the organization has established ecologically friendly enterprises such as shade-grown coffee that allow forest-dwellers to make a living without harming the environment.¹⁰⁷ Yet, none of these examples is placed within the broader context of poverty in Chiapas and Mexico. The reason for this seems to lie in the fact that Conservation International is a Washington D.C. based organization that is engaged in conservation efforts around the world. As a result CI's approach to Chiapas would not be shaped by the first hand experience of poverty, land reform, and political repression that have shaped the Zapatistas. Instead, Sundberg claims that it leans on its technical, scientific perspective to obtain a "neutral" view of the situation. This could explain why CI's examples give no indication as to who has benefited from these projects and how they affect the overall political and economic situation in Chiapas; it is distanced by circumstance and by its values from the fractious situation within the reserve. As such its primary concern is not reducing poverty so much as protecting the jungle. CI recognizes to some extent that the invasion of the reserve by settlers was precipitated by the need for land. Yet its 1995 report's statements on the situation do not examine these issues at length.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the report does not explain how land and the rebellion are linked, nor does that seem to be

¹⁰⁶ Peter A. Seligmann and Russell A. Mittermeier, 2005, <http://www.conservation.org/xp/CIWEB/about/annual_report.xml> (9 March 2004).

¹⁰⁷ Conservation International, 1995 Annual Report (Washington: CI Communications Department, 1996), 23; Conservation International, 1997 Annual Report (Washington: CI Communications Department, 1998), 25; Conservation International, 1999 Annual Report (Washington: CI Communications Department, 2000), 11; Conservation International, 2001 Annual Report (Washington: CI Communications Department, 2002), 14.

¹⁰⁸ Conservation International, 1995 Annual Report, 22-23.

CI's primary concern as opposed to the damage these invasions are supposedly causing to the forest.

In studying CI's perspective on the jungle its descriptions of the land conflicts in the Lacandón Jungle are particularly telling in their vagueness. In its 1995 annual report, CI mentioned that since early 1994 Tzeltal Mayan farmers had been entering the reserve in large numbers in search of land as a result of the Zapatista uprising. In the process they settled on land held by the Lacandón Community, sparking a conflict between the two groups of Maya. The organization's report represents CI as having acted at the time to resolve the situation. The report claimed that CI's biological stations in the reserve provided "a conservation presence" and that it had worked with "all parties" to obtain a settlement for these land disputes. Finally, the report stated that CI staffers had been working with people in the region to create new economic opportunities.¹⁰⁹ CI said nothing else about the matter until its ten-year retrospective in its 1996 annual report.¹¹⁰ In it, there was a section on cultural diversity which mentioned that CI's staff had been working with the Tzeltal, Chol, and Lacandon Mayas and thus was in a position to negotiate with "all stakeholders" when pressure for land led to outright hostilities.¹¹¹ Nowhere, though, did it say what the results of CI's involvement in negotiations were. Such an omission seems significant given that CI wishes to demonstrate how it can resolve ethnic tensions when conservation issues are at stake. The organisation considers cultural diversity and biodiversity are inseparable and thus wishes to act as a mediator

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ I contacted CI by mail and e-mail when I did not receive an annual report marked 1996 and was informed by that they had chosen to publish it within their ten year retrospective *The First Decade 1987-1997*.

¹¹¹ Conservation International, *The First Decade 1987-1997* (Washington: CI Communications Department, 1997), 47.

between the settlers and the Lacandón. Yet the absence of any description of the actual progress of this mediation seems odd given these goals. This matter shall be addressed later within this thesis when I finally come to the matter of the current state of the conflict within the reserve.

The differing focus of CI and the ELZN in regards to political developments in Chiapas is significant in light of the fact the Lacandón Maya land grant has been a major grievance on the part of many non-Lacandón communities living within the Lacandon jungle. One such community, the Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, angrily denounced the concession in a 23 February 2003 letter. The municipality claimed that over 60 communities with prior applications for land were living in the area at the time of the concession. In the process the government had ignored over 1,500 Chol, Tojolabal, Tzotzil, and Tzeltal families who were already residing in the area. It further alleged that the grant process was highly irregular since the time in between the Lacandón application and the Presidential decree had taken only eight months while claims that had been pending for over fifteen years were not answered.¹¹² The municipality also complained that not only had the government ignored them for several years, but that it had only bothered to pay attention to them after their settlements were declared illegal.¹¹³ These complaints illustrate why the land in the rainforest has become so hotly contested by the Zapatistas since they feel that their prior claims to the land had been ignored by the government. They also mirror the EZLN's own grievances over the

¹¹² Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sc/c/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (October, 2004).

¹¹³ Ibid; It gives no date as to when, but the letter indicates that this was some time after the EZLN's 1 January 1994 uprising.

Mexican federal government's abandonment of agrarian reform, explaining why the EZLN sided with the outlawed settlements in this dispute.

For the Zapatistas and their supporters the dispute over the reserve is tied up in their identity as indigenous Mexicans. This identity primarily rests on how the Zapatistas conceive of indigenous rights within the political landscape of Mexico. Up until the Third Declaration From the Lacandón Jungle the Zapatistas had primarily discussed rights strictly in regard to the rights of the Mexican people as a whole as defined by the original 1917 constitution. However, by the time they released the Third Declaration in 1995, they were claiming that their rebellion was driven by the need to call people's attention to the plight of Mexico's indigenous people. The declaration said that the country's problems could not be resolved without incorporating the indigenous people into the nation through respecting "their own social, political, and cultural organization."¹¹⁴ In turn, this statement has been reflected in the EZLN's frequent complaints that the government has continuously ignored or has been hostile to the needs and desires of Mexico's indigenous population.¹¹⁵ These statements recall the effect that the government's abandonment of land reform in the 1980s had on mobilizing the EZLN towards its 1994 rebellion, which was discussed in the first chapter. Thus they should be taken as indicative of the effect that government policy has had on the political attitudes of the Zapatista base communities within the reserve.

¹¹⁴ EZLN, "Third Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle," in The Zapatista Reader, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), 236.

¹¹⁵ Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, 14 March 2000, "We Are Not Going to Permit Relocation," <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/2000/amc_rfm_reserve_mar00.html> (20 February 2005); Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos to Guadalupe Loeza, January 1999, "Are the Zapatista Indigenous Communities Worse Off Than Before The Uprising?" in ¡Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising, ed. Žiga Vodovnik (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 361-362; EZLN, "Third Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle," 236; EZLN, "Fourth Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle," 245.

This attitude appears to apply as much to Montes Azules as it does to the Constitution. The Autonomous Municipality of Ricardo Flores Magón, for example, has supported the ELZN and has been very outspoken on the matter of the reserve. In a letter to the Mexican government dating back to the year 2000, the community stated that it would not bow to the government's demand to relocate outside of the reserve because the land belongs to them by historic right. It bases this assertion on the fact that its inhabitants had been legitimately applying for the lands under Mexico's agrarian reform laws years prior to the establishment of the reserve.¹¹⁶ A Zapatista named Manuel voiced a similar argument. According to him, his occupation of land in the Reserve was justified because it belonged to his ancestors.¹¹⁷ This is consistent with the Zapatistas' view that the revisions to the constitution made in the late 1980s as discussed in Chapter One are illegitimate because they stripped away the agrarian reform provisions, thus ignoring their rights in the process.¹¹⁸ While these views largely seem to equate to advocacy for peasant rights, the EZLN and their supporters mostly seem to regard these rights as being specifically indigenous, especially since most of these remarks post-date the Third Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle. For example, the Ricardo Flores Magón municipality says in its 2000 letter that it will defend its lands "as territories of our indigenous people." The municipality goes further to identify its inhabitants as Tseltales, Choles, Tojolabales, and Tzotiles, to whom they claim the land belongs by historic and

¹¹⁶ Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, 14 March 2000, "We Are Not Going to Permit Relocation," <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/2000/amc_rfm_reserve_mar00.html> (20 February 2005).

¹¹⁷ Mark Stevenson, 4 August 2002, "Tropical Rainforest Sprouts Battleground," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=13851>>, (22 February 2005).

¹¹⁸ EZLN, "Second Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle," 229.

collective right.¹¹⁹ Subcommandante Marcos expressed a similar view in a 2004 letter in which he stated that the Zapatistas' will defend the communities in Montes Azules as "the territories and rights of our indigenous peoples."¹²⁰ Given the emphasis placed on the historical/ethnic origins of the EZLN membership, it is likely that Manuel's statement about his ancestors is representative of the EZLN's emphasis on its historical roots and the indigenous heritage which it has claimed for itself.

Conservation International, on the other hand, has sided with the Mexican government. This alliance exists in spite its proclaimed position of neutrality as well as the government's often violent opposition to the Zapatista communities. There have been numerous allegations from the EZLN and their supporters that the Mexican Army is being used to intimidate and clear out settlers. The Ricardo Flores Magón Municipality, among these, claims that the military encircled the Zapatista communities during the year 2000.¹²¹ The same Municipality and Subcomandante Marcos also cited low overhead flights by helicopters from the Prosecutor General as proof of the military's intent.¹²² Those parts of the Mexican press that have sided with the movement have also implicated CI in these actions, by accusing it of providing the Mexican government with surveillance photographs of the communities in the reserve.¹²³ CI does not deny that it

¹¹⁹ Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, 14 March 2000, "We Are Not Going to Permit Relocation," (10 June 2005).

¹²⁰ Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, 13 October 2004, "Montes Azules: acosan a pobladores zapatistas," <<http://www.pacifica.com/vernota.hivs?id=3853>> (28 February 2005).

¹²¹ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (13 November, 2004).

¹²² Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (13, November, 2004); Weinberg, 130.

¹²³ Hermann Bellinghausen, 25 March 2002 "EU, organismos mundiales y trasnacionales quieren *limpiar* de indígenas Montes Azules," <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2002/mar02/020325/009n1pol.php?origen=politica.html>> (23 March 2005);

has been carrying out surveillance flights over the communities. Instead, its official line is that these flights were carried out for the purpose of assessing habitat loss and deny that they have been pressuring the Mexican government to evict the communities. However, CI's claim is seemingly contradicted by the Mexican Newspaper, La Jornada which reported in 2003 that Ignacio March, CI's director in Chiapas, had admitted that the organization has pressed the government to evict the settlers.¹²⁴ Though CI presents itself as being a neutral mediator in the conflict its work with the government hardly allows it to assume a position of neutrality. This is especially the case given the hostility of the EZLN towards the government.

The Zapatistas' hostility towards the government has persisted even following the ousting of the PRI government by Vicente Fox in 2000. On 19 July 2003, Marcos announced that the EZLN was formally suspending all contact with the Mexican government following what it called the failure of Mexican politicians to recognize the rights of indigenous people and an election campaign marked by high absenteeism.¹²⁵ However, this break seems to have begun in August 2001 when the Zapatistas rejected Constitutional reforms on the rights of indigenous people because certain provisions had been watered down in committee.¹²⁶ Subcomandante Marcos condemned the changes as

Hermann Bellinghausen, 10 June 2003, "Presiona asociación estadounidense para realizar desalojos en Chiapas," <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/jun03/030610/017n1pol.php>> (24 March 2005).

¹²⁴ Lisa Bowen, 9 December 2004, "Conservation Internacional Responds To World Watch Article," <http://www.conservation.org/xp/news/press_releases/2004/wwresponse.xml> (23 March 2005); Hermann Bellinghausen, "Presiona asociación estadounidense para realizar desalojos en Chiapas," La Jornada, (24 March 2005).

¹²⁵ Subcomandante Marcos, 22 July 2003, "Some Changes," <<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=8&ItemID=3938>> (1 April 2005).

¹²⁶ BBC, 15 August 2001, "Indigenous Mexicans reject new law," <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1492124.stm>> (1 April 2005); BBC, 28 April 2001, "Mexican Indians reject rights bill," <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1301490.stm>> (1 April 2005).

denying the will of the people.¹²⁷ As a result the reforms seem to have reinforced the Zapatistas' longstanding grievance that the demands of Mexico's indigenous people have been ignored.

Considering these facts, Conservation International's involvement in the region is hardly as neutral as CI makes it out to be. Its ties to the Mexican government place it on one side of the conflict, substantiating Sundberg's claim that ecological arguments can never be socially neutral since they are also socio-political arguments.¹²⁸ In the case of Montes Azules it has taken the position that the settler populations are the main cause of deforestation because they are unfamiliar with the forest landscape and thus cannot properly care for it. Yet, as pointed out earlier, a great deal of the illicit settlements predate the both the reserve and the formal demarcation of Lacandón and therefore would have had years to adapt to the landscape. However, CI never mentions this fact. As a result CI's attempts to remain a detached observer do not actually provide it with a more accurate view of the reserve. Instead it merely ignores the political and social context of the landscape and those facts that are inconvenient to its own pre-conceptions about deforestation.

Meanwhile CI's position on relocation directly threatens the EZLN which is based within the Lacandón jungle. More than half of the irregular settlements are Zapatista base communities and are often located in places that CI has identified as high priority conservation spots. For example, according to a map of the protected areas within the Jungle provided by CI, the Cañadas region, which has been a major Zapatista recruiting ground and contains the autonomous municipalities of 17 de Noviembre,

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Juanita Sundberg, "NGO Landscapes in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala," Geographical Review 88, no. 3 (July 1998): 390.

Primero de Enero, Eneresto Che Guevara, San Manuel, and Francisco Villa.

Furthermore, Ricardo Flores Magón falls within one of the protected natural areas.¹²⁹

The latter community also mentions several more Zapatista communities within its territory affected by the Reserve's borders. These include Agua Azul, Chamizal, Emiliano Zapata, El Zapotal, San Antonio Escobar, San Felipe, San Pedro, and Villa Rosas. These communities also fall in areas listed by Conservation International as being high priority areas for conserving the environment.¹³⁰ Given this situation it seems as though CI's attempts to distance itself from the political landscape of the conflict merely hinder its efforts to act as a mediator since it supports a position that threatens one of the parties in the reserve.

Judging from the statements released by the Ricardo Flores Magón municipality, Subcomandante Marcos, and news reports, CI's intervention in 1994/1995 accomplished little in resolving the conflict, involving the population, or reaching its conservation goals. In 10 April 2003 a group of Lacandones came to the community of Neuvo San Rafael and threatened the people there with expulsion.¹³¹ In 2005, La Jornada continued to run stories about the ongoing dispute in Montes Azules, such as the arrest of two Tzotiles who had returned to the reserve, as well as the eviction of one hundred and sixty

¹²⁹ Conservation International, n.d., "Resumen Ejecutivo - Selva Lacandona Siglo XXI Estrategia Conjunta Para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad," <<http://www.ci-mexico.org.mx/PDFS/resumen.pdf>> (10 October 2004); Subcomandante Marcos, "A Good Government," in Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 620; Harvey, 190-191.

¹³⁰ Autonomous Councils, 23 February 2002, "Threatened Communities Speak," <http://www.zmag.org/content/Chiapas/councils_expulsion.cfm> (29 June 2006); Conversation International, n.d., "Anexo 4. - Localidades críticas para la Conservación de la Selva Lacandona por orden de prioridad" <<http://www.ci-mexico.org.mx/PDFS/ANEXO4.PDF>> (13 October 2004); Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (12 November, 2004).

¹³¹ Hermann Bellinghausen, 13 April 2003, "Comienza Nuevo intento de desalojo de comunidades indias en Montes Azules," <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/abr031030413/025m1pol/php?origen=index.html>> (29 January 2005).

families from the reserve in February.¹³² Both Subcomandante Marcos and Zapatista communities have continued to denounce attempts to expel the settlers in the reserve.¹³³

CI's own proclamations of its concern for cultural diversity are questionable given Ignacio March's admission in May of 2002 that CI had pressured the federal government to evict the irregular communities in the reserve.¹³⁴ Moreover, March himself said that the problem in the jungle was overpopulation and therefore the settlers, "...can't all be peasants'."¹³⁵ Similarly, CI's head anthropologist, James Nations, stated in 2001, "This whole mythology of the Maya as the men of corn, that every Maya family has a genetic right to a piece of forest and a bag of seed corn -- that's a destructive attitude."¹³⁶ In effect Nations claimed that Mayan culture itself was the biggest threat to the reserve even though the organization he belongs to says that involving local populations in its conservation efforts and protecting cultural diversity is integral to its work. The extent to which his sentiments reflect the actual attitudes of CI were revealed in the November/December 2004 issue of *World Watch Magazine* where his argument was featured in an article entitled "A Challenge to Conservationists," which in addition to CI also looked at the attitudes of World Wildlife Federation and The Nature

¹³² Elio Henriquez, 13 February 2005, "Liberan a dos indígenas que regresaron a Montes Azules," <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2005/feb05/050213/033n3est.php>> (9 March 2005); Angeles Mariscal and Victor Ruiz, 5 febrero 2005, "Reubican en Nuevo Montes Azules a 160 familias desalojadas de la selva Lacandona," <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2005/feb05/050205/031n1est.php>> (9 March 2005).

¹³³ Autonomous Councils, 23 February 2002, "Threatened Communities Speak," <http://www.zmag.org/content/Chiapas/councils_expulsion.cfm> (4 November 2004); Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/scic/urgencia/020226marfin.htm>> (October, 2004); Subcomandante Marcos to Germán Deshea, 21 March 2000, "Carta y comunicado, marzo de 2000," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/consultaEZLN/comunicados/000321es.htm>> (26 March 2005).

¹³⁴ Hermann Bellinghausen, 10 June 2003 "Presiona asociación estadounidense para realizar desalojos en Chiapas," <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/jun03/030610/017n1pol.php>> (11 March 2005).

¹³⁵ Dudley Althaus, n.d. "The Fated Forest," <<http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/special/01/forest/>> (11 March 2005).

¹³⁶ Dudley Althaus, 30 September 2001, "Few Options: Searching For Solutions," <<http://www.chron.com/content/chronicle/special/01/forest/options.html>> (08 November 2005).

Conservancy. The article claimed that all three organizations were increasingly excluding indigenous people whom they had meant to include in their projects. Most revealing was a CI biologist working in Brazil's Lower Xingu region who told the article's author, "Quite frankly, I don't care what the Indians want. We have to work to conserve the biodiversity."¹³⁷

These statements make it clear that CI does not necessarily regard local participation as key to its ecological goals, which explains its lack of attention to the politically explosive situation within the Montes Azules reserve. Even though the reserve is situated in an area that underwent an armed uprising, CI has shown no actual signs of engaging the population that carried out the rebellion beyond the vague pronouncements of its reports. Whatever CI's proposed solutions for deforestation, in reality it seems entirely focused on removing the settlers. It is worth taking a look at CI's operations in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, which has experienced political conflicts over land and conservation similar to those in Montes Azules. According to its reports from 1997, one of CI's research stations was burnt down by farmers who wished to open up the Laguna del Tigre National Park in the Petén to *milpa* agriculture. In the process the farmers also took some CI staffers hostage. According to CI, the farmers demanded land and that CI abandon the reserve in exchange for the staffers' release. The organization responded by ignoring their demands and reporting the kidnapping to the authorities. CI stated that the farmers gradually abandoned their demands upon seeing themselves portrayed as criminals in the Guatemalan media. CI claims that it resolved the matter by sending in its Guatemala program director, Carlos Soza, to convince the farmers to side with CI. Soza

¹³⁷ Mac Chapin, n.d., "A Challenge to Conservationists,"
<<http://www.minesandcommunities.org/Action/press494.htm>> (13 April 2005).

apparently won them over by explaining how CI's programs would benefit the inhabitants of the region. CI ended its account of the incident by stating that while it had new allies in the region and that its station is operational once more, the pressure for land continues to grow. As such, they claim that their sustainable economic development programs are more important than ever.¹³⁸

Nothing in this description matches up with Ignacio March or James Nations' remarks or CI's desire to relocate the settlers in Montes Azules. It even admits that the situation is still unresolved despite the picture it paints of obtaining an easy solution to tensions between demands for land and its work in Guatemala. The organization's thinking seems to reflect the view that human activity is innately detrimental to 'natural' landscapes, a line of thought that reflects the treatment of resident populations in Yellowstone and Mount Meru. Sundberg explains that, in attempting to remain distanced, NGOs' neglect the broader reality of what affects the reserve and focus on single causes for deforestation, namely the peasant as a threat to nature.¹³⁹ This approach falls more in line with older conservationist ideas that essentially defined the landscape by a set of aesthetic values, as opposed to social and political realities. Moreover, its discourse frequently ignores the role that the government has played in the deforestation. For example, prior to the establishment of the reserve, the Guatemalan government sanctioned activities such as road building, cattle ranching, and logging within the forest. Yet CI never addresses these factors in its work in Guatemala.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, its reports on Chiapas fail to discuss the Mexican government's activities that have contributed to deforestation. Moreover, none of its reports raise the question as to whether or not the

¹³⁸ Conservation International, *1997 Annual Report*, 15.

¹³⁹ Juanita Sundberg, (July 1998): 390, 396-397.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: 400.

government's economic policies have contributed to settlement in the reserve, which it alleges causes deforestation. This is even though the Zapatistas have repeatedly identified government policies as responsible for their plight. With these omissions in mind it seems as though CI is unable to effectively address the causes for deforestation in the reserve because the causes it identifies are so incredibly narrow, even within its claims of settler populations being the primary cause of deforestation within the reserve.

The nature of the conflict between conservationists and settlers within the Lacandón jungle is defined by the inability of Conservation International to address the issues surrounding the reserve outside of the potential damage caused by settlers. The nature reserve model assumes an apolitical approach to social and political problems because the model tries to project objectivity. The EZLN are primarily concerned with seeing that their needs are addressed and that they have a substantive role in the decision making in the reserve, having put up with years of neglect from the government. They believe that the establishment of the reserve is yet another example of the Mexican government ignoring the needs of indigenous Mexicans since it was established over the land claims of settlers who had been legally applying for land in the jungle years earlier. While CI claims that involving local populations in the decision-making process is integral to its conservation model its statements show a glaring absence of discussion on the dimensions of the conflict in the reserve. None of its efforts at mediation or providing conservation alternatives seems to have had any beneficial impact on the situation. In fact the individual statements of its staff indicate that CI is hostile to the settlers' culture and sees it only as an impediment to its goals. This would explain why they have pressured the Mexican government to evict the settlers, while ignoring the

government's own role in deforestation. As a result CI cannot address the EZLN's stance on the reserve since it entirely rejects the question of indigenous rights.

Chapter Three: Federal Policy and Zapatista Governance, the Conflict of Planning and Local Political Culture

The most serious axis of the conflict over the reserve is in the relationship between the settlers and the EZLN on one side, and the federal government of Mexico on the other. In addition to longstanding grievances, the EZLN's attitude towards the government is tempered by the PRI government's use of violence against the rebellion, even after peace accords were signed. However, the end of the PRI's seventy-year rule in the 2000 election and the subsequent withdrawal of the military did not guarantee peace. When put before the Mexican congress, the peace accords' proposals for indigenous government were watered down by legislators. This caused the EZLN to break off relations with the new government and return to the jungle. As a result, the Zapatistas remained hostile to the government.

The EZLN's dispute with the government is driven by the issue of land reform. And it is the matter of land reform that also fuels the dispute over the Lacandón jungle. Many of the proposals of the San Andrés Accords dealt with defining indigenous government and its control over resources. It was these proposals which were watered-down by the revisions made by the Mexican congress against the protests of the EZLN. Similarly, the government's continued promotion of free market economics seems at odds with the EZLN's desire for local control over economic matters. Moreover, this policy also appears to be at odds with the government's stated conservation goals. Yet the EZLN has shown more concern for the integrity of the jungle than CI's alarmist statements indicate. With these matters in mind, the following chapter will examine how these issues relate to the Zapatistas' attitudes towards the government's involvement in

the jungle. The EZLN's stance in the reserve is clearly defined by the fact that it sees itself as defending the inviolable rights of Mexico's indigenous people from the predations of a hostile government. At the time same time, due to the government's economic policies the organisation regards this goal as inseparable from the protecting the jungle.

By the time that they rose up on January 1st, 1994, the EZLN had been formed in a crucible of repression that was reinforced by the decision of the PRI government to use the army to crush the rebellion.¹⁴¹ The fighting raged until 12 January when the Mexican public came out in protest against the repression of the rebels. By then the Lacandón Jungle was under rebel control. At this point the government was forced to seek a diplomatic solution to the conflict.¹⁴² As soon as both parties agreed upon a mediation process, the PRI government withdrew some of the military forces on 21 December. The EZLN declared a six day truce on 1 January 1995.¹⁴³ Even at this early stage problems were arising with the peace process. Prior to the withdrawal, Subcomandante Marcos wrote a letter on 3 December 1994 to the new president of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, denouncing the entire Mexican political system which had brought the new President to power. Precisely why he sent such a hostile letter when the EZLN was still negotiating with the government is uncertain, but that he did so reveals how much the group already distrusted the government. The letter claimed that Zedillo was "the personification of an

¹⁴¹ George A. Collier and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello, Basta! Land & the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas (Oakland: Food First Books, 1999), 127; Neil Harvey The Chiapas Rebellion: the Struggle For Land and Democracy (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 195; Bill Weinberg, Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico (New York: Verso, 2000), 107-108.)

¹⁴² Weinberg, 109, 112.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 115.

unjust system, antidemocratic, and criminal.”¹⁴⁴ It also claimed that the government had breached the cease-fire agreement by replacing the soldiers it removed with police.¹⁴⁵ The truce broke down completely when the authorities reportedly found a Zapatista safe-house in Mexico City as well as Zapatista weapons cache in Veracruz. Zedillo responded by again rolling out the army, as well as issuing an arrest warrant for Marcos and other alleged Zapatista leaders.¹⁴⁶ However, this incited a demonstration by tens of thousands of protestors in Mexico City¹⁴⁷ again saving the Zapatistas from the army. By now the government had already thrown its interest in the peace process into doubt and shown that the EZLN could not depend on its goodwill.

In 1996 the two parties negotiated the San Andrés Accords. The Accords were reached by EZLN representatives and the Commission of Concord and Pacification (COCOPA), a team of legislators from Mexico’s three largest political parties: the PRI, the National Action Party (PAN), and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).¹⁴⁸ The final version of the Accords appeared in February 1996 and consisted of three documents endorsed by the rebels and the federal government. These documents included a joint declaration of principles for a new relationship between the Mexican State and Mexico’s indigenous peoples. The declaration was followed by a set of proposals based on these principles as well as a set of commitments to Chiapas made by the rebels, the state government, and the federal government.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, “Mr. Zedillo, Welcome To the Nightmare,” in Our Word Is Our Weapon: Selected Writings, ed. Juaná Ponce de Leon (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 62, 70.

¹⁴⁵ Weinberg, 140.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 144, 145.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 148.

¹⁴⁹ COCOPA, 16 February 1996, “Agreement on Indigenous Rights and Culture,” <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/acuerdos.en.htm. (03 June 2005); COCOPA, 16 February 1996, “Joint Declaration That the Federal Government and the EZLN Shall Submit to National Debating and Decision-

All three declarations had set out to address the historical inequality of Mexico's indigenous people and strengthen their participation in political and economic decision-making.¹⁵⁰ While they touched upon matters such as the rights of indigenous women, education, and rights to mechanisms of communication such as television stations, the Accords' points on self governance, autonomy, environmental sustainability, economic policy, and lands are of primary concern given their bearing on the dispute in Montes Azules. The accords define the concept of "autonomy" as it applies to indigenous people as them being free to decide their own forms of "internal governance" and how they choose to organize themselves in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.¹⁵¹ This reflects demands made by the EZLN during a February 1994 dialogue to end centralization of the state and allow indigenous communities to govern with political, economic, and cultural autonomy.¹⁵² Moreover, the documents also recognize that this autonomy means, "autonomy as collectives with different cultures," and that it should be enshrined in national law.¹⁵³ As a part of implementing these ideas, the authorities were to oversee the transfer of resources to the local level, which would have given indigenous

Making Bodies," <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/documento_1.en.htm> (03 July 2005); COCOPA, 16 February 1996, "Document 2: Joint Proposals That the Federal Government and the EZLN Agree to Remit to the National Debating and Decision-Making Bodies In Accordance With Paragraph 1.4 of the Rules of Procedure," <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/document_2.en.htm> (03 July 2005); COCOPA, 16 February 1996, "Commitments For Chiapas By the State and Federal Governments and the EZLN Under Paragraph 1.3 of the Rules of Procedure," <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/documento_3.en.htm> (03 July 2005).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ COCOPA, 16 February 1996, "Document 2: Joint Proposals That the Federal Government and the EZLN Agree to Remit to the National Debating and Decision-Making Bodies In Accordance With Paragraph 1.4 of the Rules of Procedure," <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/document_2.en.htm> (03 June 2005).

¹⁵² CCRI-CG, 1 March 1994, "Demands Submitted by the Zapatistas During the February '94 Dialogue," <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/ccri_di_demand_mar94.html> (04 June 2005).

¹⁵³ COCOPA, 16 February 1996, "Document 2: Joint Proposals That the Federal Government and the EZLN Agree to Remit to the National Debating and Decision-Making Bodies In Accordance With Paragraph 1.4 of the Rules of Procedure," <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/document_2.en.htm> (03 July 2005).

communities a greater say in how public funds are administered in their area.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, the accords stated that the entire area of land which indigenous people occupy or use is “the material basis for their reproduction,”¹⁵⁵ thus defining possession and control of land as essential to Mexico’s indigenous people. The proposal also mentions that indemnification will be paid to those communities whose natural resources have been damaged by state exploitation.¹⁵⁶

It is not hard to see how these points reflect the EZLN’s grievances over land. The accords recognize both the EZLN’s stated need for and right to land while taking steps to alleviate the dependence on the federal government’s resources that was discussed in Chapter One. The only caveat is that those resources which fall under the direct control of the nation shall not be subject to this transfer¹⁵⁷ which seems to undermine the EZLN’s position in Montes Azules. However, the EZLN did not object to this point. It accepted the accords, but objected to a lack of a solution for the issue of Article 27 of the Constitution. It also felt that the compensation for damage to natural resources in indigenous territories was insufficient. The EZLN said it was necessary “to develop a policy of true sustainability that preserves the lands, territories, and natural resource of indigenous peoples, in short, takes into account the social costs of development projects.”¹⁵⁸ The organisation also requested that there be a specific timeline for implementing the accords as well as explicit commitments from the government for access to “adequate infrastructure,” training, and “economic

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ COCOPA, 16 February 1996, “Document 2: Joint Proposals That the Federal Government and the EZLN Agree to Remit to the National Debating and Decision-Making Bodies In Accordance With Paragraph 1.4 of the Rules of Procedure,” <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/document_2.en.htm> (03 July 2005).

resources.”¹⁵⁹ The importance of these ideas to the EZLN is found not only in how the organization accepted them, but, as Bill Weinberg points out, their being “based on a system of parallel power which already existed in Chiapas.”¹⁶⁰ As such, the EZLN support for these points is based on the fact that implementing the Accords would legalize the systems of government and economic organization which if favoured.

However, President Zedillo never implemented the accords and instead increased military pressure on the Zapatistas. A year after the negotiations, the EZLN sent out a letter denouncing the federal government for failing to keep its word. It contained the phrase, “Power once again applies a military solution,”¹⁶¹ reaffirming the Zapatistas’ cynicism of the Mexican political establishment. The EZLN saw the government as the root of all violence in Chiapas, blaming the infamous massacre of 45 EZLN supporters in the town of Acteal on the government.¹⁶² Eventually overtures towards peace were made by Chiapas’ governor at the time while the military withdrew from the EZLN stronghold of La Realidad in 1998. Nothing materialized out of these offers and the peace process was stalled until 2000, when the *Partido Revolucionaria Institucional* was finally ejected from public office by the victory of the National Action Party’s (*Partido Acción Nacional* - PAN) candidate, Vicente Fox. In February 2001, the EZLN began to march to the capital to negotiate with the Mexican congress to seek approval of the Accords.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Weinberg, 154.

¹⁶¹ Subcomandante Marcos, 14 February 1997, “EZLN Communique, 14 February 1997,” <<http://www.ezln.org/documentos/1997/19970214a.en.htm>> (05 June 2005). Note that in this case ‘Power’ was capitalized within the original document and is only referred in capitals throughout.

¹⁶² BBC World Service, 26 December 1997, “Zapatistas Blame Mexican President For Massacre,” <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/america/42109.stm>> (12 July 2005).

¹⁶³ BBC World Service, 6 January 1998, “Mexican Army Withdraws From Rebel Stronghold,” <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/america/44495.stm>> (12 July 2005); BBC World Service, 1 March 1998, “Chiapas Governor Announces Peace Plan,” <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/america/61509.stm>> (12 July 2005); BBC World Service, 1 July 1998, “Mexican President Calls on Rebels to Talk Peace,”

Though it seemed that the new presidency had at least spurred some new movement in the peace process, it was obvious that the EZLN was still cautious about the new government. The Zapatistas stated they were not coming to Mexico City to negotiate with the government and would not do so unless Fox fulfilled three conditions: withdraw the military from Chiapas, release all Zapatista prisoners, and fulfill the San Andrés Accords by putting COCOPA's proposals into law.¹⁶⁴ Fox withdrew the military, which was out of the jungle by April, and released several Zapatista prisoners.¹⁶⁵ Yet passing the accords into law was not as easy since COCOPA's proposals were criticized by many legislators, particularly former ministers of Ernesto Zedillo. Their attitude was summed up by former agrarian minister Arturo Warman who stated that the proposed law would lead to legal confrontations between ethnic groups seeking to use the law's legal ambiguities against each other. Furthermore, he argued that certain provisions would be used against minorities within indigenous communities.¹⁶⁶ When the law was finally

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/124414.stm>> (12 July, 2005); De los Corresponsales, 09 February 2001 "Buscarain seguridad en la salida del EZLN," <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/noticia_busqueda.html?id_nota=47389&tabla=nacion_n> (13 July 2005).

¹⁶⁴ Subcomandante Marcos, 2 December 2000, "EZLN Conditions to Fox for Resuming the Dialogue," <<http://www.ezln.org/documentos/2000/20001202.c.en.htm>> (15 July 2004); Subcomandante Marcos, "FAQ on March," in *¡Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising* (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 520.

¹⁶⁵ *AL*, 30 March 2001, "Constata Álvarez retiro militar," <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5265&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=30-MAR-01> (15 July 2005); José Luis Ruiz, 21 April 2001, "Fox: termina la guerra; se inicia el desarrollo,"

<http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5526&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=21-ABR-01> (15 July 2005); *N.A.*, 16 March 2001, "Condiciona Fox el retiro de tropas en Chiapas,"

<http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_nacion.despliega?var=50103&var_sub_actual=o&var_fecha=16-MAR-01> (15 July 2005).

¹⁶⁶ Fabiola Guarneros y Alejandro Torres, 28 March 2001, "Confronta ley Cocopa a 'foxistas' y 'zedillistas',"

<http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_nacion.despliega?var=50914&var_sub_actual=c&var_fecha=28-MAR-01> (18 July 2005); Juan Arvizu Arriola, 16 April 2001, "La ley indígena, con ambigüedades y errores: Arturo Warman,"

<http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5467&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=16-ABR-01> (18 July 2005).

passed, law makers had excised the article which stated that communities would agree on the use of natural resources “in a collective manner” and removed the designation of indigenous territories as the totality of the lands that the indigenous occupy and use. Moreover, their use was limited to the “modalities and limitations established for property in the constitution.” In regard to exercising autonomy, the revised law completely deleted a section that recognized that indigenous communities were free to associate in order to coordinate their actions.¹⁶⁷ Of the major parties, only the PRD opposed these changes.¹⁶⁸ The EZLN responded by denouncing the changes as a betrayal of the accords and as avoiding a resolution of the causes of the uprising. They then promptly broke off contact with the government.¹⁶⁹

The failure to pass the original COCOPA proposals into law has left the peace process unresolved. When it broke off contact with the government, the EZLN stated that the changes would perpetuate the conditions that “give reason for being to different armed groups in Mexico,” and thus the Zapatista Army would continue its “resistance and rebellion.” Even with their call to civil society for non-violent resistance¹⁷⁰ these words make it clear that the ELZN still regards itself as engaged in rebellion against the government, a position justified in the EZLN’s view by a long litany of government and military atrocities. The Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality’s 23 February

¹⁶⁷ EZLN, N.D., “Cuadro Comparativo de la Iniciativa de la Cocopa y el Dictamen de ley Indígena,” <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/cuadro010430.html> (23 August 2005); Fabiola Guaneros, Alejandro Torres and Guillermina Guillén, 26 April 2001, “Aprueba Senado ley indígena,” <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5575&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=26-ABR-01> (23 July 2005).

¹⁶⁸ Jorge Herrera y Jorge Teherán, 28 April 2001, “Aprobarán PRI y AN ley indígena,” <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5596&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=28-ABR-01> (23 July 2001).

¹⁶⁹ Fredy Martín Pérez, 01 May 2001, “Rompe EZLN con diálogo con Fox,” <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5625&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=01-MAY-01> (23 July 2005).

¹⁷⁰ Subcomandante Marcos, 29 April 2001, “La reform aprobada traiciona los acuerdos de San Andrés: EZLN,” <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2001/may01/010501/ezln.html>> (26 July 2005).

2003 letter, for example, reads like a catalogue of every act of violence committed against every indigenous group that has lived in the Lacandón jungle.¹⁷¹ The EZLN consistently refers to the government as “the bad government” and accuses it of conducting a “war of extermination.” It also mentions the San Andrés Accords and how the government “betrayed” the accords by modifying many of their points.¹⁷²

The Zapatistas’ stance on the law comes from the land issue which led to the uprising in the first place. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Lacandón Jungle had been used by the Mexican government in the 1970s to divert pressure for land redistribution away from wealthy estates. Thousands of settlers had already moved into the area before the government effectively outlawed much of the settlements by signing the land over to the Lacandón Maya in 1972, and once more in 1978 with the establishment of the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The establishment of these protected areas are the central grievance of the Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, which claims that both land concessions have infringed upon several communities’ ejidal rights under Article 27 of the Constitution, especially given that thirty percent of Montes Azules falls outside of the jungle area.¹⁷³ It is clear that the municipality regards the reserves in the same light as the revision of Article 27 in the 1980s: an abandonment of Mexico’s indigenous people by the government. Both the Municipality and Subcomandante Marcos have made it clear that they regard access to land as stipulated in the original

¹⁷¹ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, “Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules,” <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (28 July 2005).

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, “Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules,” <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (28 July 2005).

version of Article 27 in the Constitution as a historic and fundamental right of Mexico's indigenous people.¹⁷⁴

Congress' changes to the original COCOPA proposals have undermined many of the EZLN's political goals and reinforced its stance on indigenous rights, specifically the desire for collective decision-making over the use of natural resources. One of the deleted sections, for example, stated that the communities would decide in a collective fashion on how to use their natural resources. Removing this, and the original definition of indigenous territories – replacing it with lands where the majority of the populace is indigenous rather than those lands inhabited and used by indigenous people – further obscured those goals within the law.¹⁷⁵ These goals were evident at the outset of the rebellion when the EZLN issued a series of “Revolutionary Laws” which included an agrarian law that provided for the expropriation of large land-holdings, their redistribution among poor campesinos, and the re-orientation of these lands towards producing foodstuffs.¹⁷⁶ Clearly the EZLN was trying to re-establish collective, local control over land resources in the wake of the rebellion. However, the changes to the original COCOPA proposals undermined this goal. Thus, these revisions were seen by the Zapatistas as an infringement on their agrarian rights. Their determination to see these provisions carried out was made clear when the organization chose to unilaterally implement the accords in the form of autonomous governments in Zapatista controlled

¹⁷⁴ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, “Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules,” <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (28 July 2005); Subcomandante Marcos, 21 March 2001, “A: Germán Dehesa. Re: Lacandón Jungle,” <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/consultaEZLN/comunicados/000321es.htm>> (1 August 2005).

¹⁷⁵ EZLN, N.D., “Cuadro Comparativo de la Iniciativa de la Cocopa y el Dictamen de ley Indígena,” <http://www.ezln.org/san_andres/cuadro010430.html> (23 August 2005).

¹⁷⁶ EZLN, N.D., “EZLN – Revolutionary Agrarian Law,” <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/law_agrarian.html> (24 August 2005).

lands, regardless of the legal standing of these actions.¹⁷⁷ The most telling aspect of this action was that though the government hailed the move as a positive development and said that it was constitutional, EZLN Comandante Esther said the government was trying to force them to give up their indigenous rights “to be recognized as Mexicans,”¹⁷⁸ highlighting the level of enmity this dispute has fostered.

The EZLN’s objection to the government’s conservation policies in the jungle seems to stem from the organisation’s belief that indigenous people have a right to control the land that they live on and the resources that come with it. Given its various statements on the matter it appears as though the EZLN backs self-government as a method of ensuring indigenous rights and freedom against a hostile and neglectful state. This idea was most explicitly expressed in the Fifth Declaration From the Lacandón Jungle, written in 1998 when the organization was still facing off against Zedillo. The Declaration stated that any constitutional reform on indigenous rights must incorporate the San Andrés Accords in order to recognize the fundamental demands of the Indian people.¹⁷⁹ It also rejected any legislation which sought to limit indigenous rights to the local level on the basis that doing so would be an attempt to fragment Mexico’s indigenous peoples and thus pave the way for their annihilation. It reasoned then that such legislation could not assure peace.¹⁸⁰ This statement ties in with the rejection of the modified COCOPA law since the provisions for allowing indigenous communities to

¹⁷⁷ Hermann Bellinghausen, 10 August 2003, “La Fiesta de *Los Caracoles*,” <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/08/10/003n2pol.php?origen=index.html&fly=1>> (24 August 2003).

¹⁷⁸ BBC World Service, 11 August 2003, “Mexico calls for rebel dialogue,” <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3140313.stm>> (24 August 2003); Hermann Bellinghausen, 10 August 2003, “La Fiesta de *Los Caracoles*,” <<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/08/10/003n2pol.php?origen=index.html&fly=1>> (24 August 2003).

¹⁷⁹ CCRI-GC, “The Fifth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle,” in *¡Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising*, ed. Žiga Vodovnik (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 675.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

coordinate their actions, which the EZLN regards as necessary for resisting further violence from the government, had been deleted. Its objection also rests on the idea that such limits attempt to break “the bonds of historical and cultural solidarity which exist among the indigenous.”¹⁸¹

Yet while these issues are critical to the EZLN, this focus on indigenous rights may be too limiting in understanding their insistence on adopting the original accords in regard to the Lacandón. The EZLN has always maintained that it and the settlers having been taking care of the jungle’s integrity. The Ricardo Flores Magón municipality says that the Accords “were created for protecting natural resources and rationally exploiting natural resources in a collective manner,” a statement that both closely mirrors the EZLN’s collectivist politics and reflects Marcos’ claim that the EZLN has been trying to protect the forest.¹⁸² Moreover, the Municipality’s characterization of the accords as establishing a system for protecting and “rationally exploiting” natural resources suggests that both local control over resources and conservation are regarded as inseparable by the Zapatistas. A letter from Marcos to a Mexican newspaper columnist in March 2001 rebuked claims that the rebels were destroying the forest by pointing out that the Zapatista army has laws against felling or burning trees in the forest which the communities are responsible for enforcing. Furthermore, he says that settlers have changed patterns of sowing to accommodate the forest and have set up a communication system for signalling the spread of fires so that they can be stopped.¹⁸³ A Zapatista commander named Jaime referred to similar laws while being interviewed by the press

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Subcomandante Marcos, 21 March 2001, “A: Germán Dehesa. Re: Lacandón Jungle,” <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/consultaEZLN/comunicados/000321es.htm>> (24 August 2005).

though he admitted that they were difficult to enforce. His admission is seemingly supported by the numerous conservationists who have found signs of deforestation around settlements.¹⁸⁴

But, as discussed earlier, conservation groups have shown a marked tendency to fixate on settler populations as the singular cause for deforestation while ignoring other causes. Much of Marcos' letter about the jungle is devoted to rebuking military actions in the region, describing examples of the military terrorizing indigenous communities and felling trees.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, many social justice groups outside of the reserve have sided with the Zapatistas on this issue. Activist Aziz Choudry, for example, reported that a 2003 Global Exchange delegation to the area found that there was more destruction around military encampments than the settler communities. Meanwhile, many of the indigenous communities accused of destroying the jungle had outlawed slash-and-burn agriculture and had turned to more sustainable forms of cultivation.¹⁸⁶ Others have also observed that while the government has sided with CI's position, it has tolerated small scale logging concessions given out by municipalities.¹⁸⁷

This information, implicating the government in the destruction of the reserve, raises questions as to the veracity of CI's claims and the consistency of the government in protecting the forest. Most of the government's critics have pointed to its economic policies when questioning the consistency of its conservation efforts inside the jungle. At the same time, Choudry and other supporters of the Zapatista position have failed to

¹⁸⁴ Mark Stevenson, 4 August 2003, "Tropical Rainforest Sprouts Battleground," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=13851>> (24 August 2003).

¹⁸⁵ Subcomandante Marcos, 21 March 2001, "A: Germán Dehesa. Re: Lacandón Jungle," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/consultaEZLN/comunicados/000321es.htm>> (24 August 2005).

¹⁸⁶ Aziz Choudry, October 2003, "Conservation International: privatizing nature, plundering biodiversity," <<http://www.grain.org/seedling/?id=272>> (31 August 2005).

¹⁸⁷ Nick Miles, 4 March 2002, "Mexico's 'devastating' forest loss," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=8506>> (7 September 2005).

provide more detailed information that fully supports their claims and refute those made by CI. However, the Mexican government's economic policies are well worth examining in this case. As covered in Chapter One, in the 1980s the Mexican government began abandoning the policy of corporatism that had been in place since the revolution in favour of liberal economics. This entailed abandoning land reform during the Presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, an act that the EZLN cites as the primary reason for its rebellion. Little has changed with the ousting of the PRI. Vicente Fox has voiced his support for NAFTA and the recent Central American Free Trade Agreement, even rejecting pleas by farmers to review NAFTA's effects on Mexico, arguing that the treaty had been beneficial for Mexicans as a whole.¹⁸⁸ As such the EZLN are as critical of his economic policy as they were of the PRI's, particularly as they apply to both the jungle and Fox's new development plan for Mexico – the Plan Puebla-Panama (PPP.)

According to the Inter-American Development Bank's website, the PPP is a development plan for Central America and Southern Mexico that involves improving infrastructure, reducing poverty in the region, reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, and increasing trade between the countries.¹⁸⁹ The PPP tends to be vague on exactly how these goals will be accomplished but certain aspects suggest that it is oriented towards the kind of liberal economics espoused by various administrations in the past twenty years.

¹⁸⁸ Agencia, 8 August 2005, "Exhorta Fox a Aprovechar TLC con Centro america," <<http://www.esmas.com/noticierostelevisa/mexico/352539.html>> (8 August 2005); BBC World Service, 7 January 2003, "Mexican Farmers' Trade Plea Rejected," <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2633749.stm>> (8 August 2003).

¹⁸⁹ Interamerican Development Bank (IABD), N.D., "Objetivos," <<http://www.iabd.org/PPP/pppobjectives.asp>> (9 August 2005).

“Economic integration” for example refers to the removal of trade barriers such as tariffs.¹⁹⁰ A description of Salinas’ presidency notes that liberalizing trade was among the many measures it took alongside privatizing state-owned firms and deregulation.¹⁹¹ In keeping with this theme, the Report of the Commission of Finance for the PPP states that one of the project’s goals is to reduce the cost and time required to carry out cross border transactions, a goal that is given its own specific policy initiative: the “Mesoamerican Initiative for the Facilitation of Commercial Exchange.” In the spirit of this, there also exists a plan for integrating road systems in Central America for the purpose of facilitating the flow of merchandise.¹⁹² According to one of the documents on the PPP, one of its goals is to exploit the potential found in the North American Free Trade Agreement.¹⁹³ Among all these initiatives the PPP does have an indigenous component. The Mexican government’s website states that among the Plan’s goals are incorporating indigenous views into development as well as creating structures and procedures that will allow for their representation.¹⁹⁴ As a result, the Plan was even

¹⁹⁰ Mark R. Brawley, *The Politics of Globalization: Gaining Perspectives, Assessing Consequences* (Orchard Park: Broadview Press, Ltd., 2003), 13; OECD, October 2001, “The Development Dimensions of Trade,” <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/2012612431455.pdf>> (10 August 2005).

¹⁹¹ Edna Jaime, “Fox’s Economic Agenda: An Incomplete Transition,” in *Mexico Under Fox*, ed. Luis Rubio and Susan Kaufman Purcell (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers: 2004), 39.

¹⁹² BID – Comisión de Promoción y Financiamiento del PPP, 1 September 2003, “Informe de la Comisión de Financiamiento del Plan Puebla-Panamá,” <http://www.iadb.org/ppp/document/documentDetails.asp?document_id=2527> (9 August 2005); IADB, N.D., “Declaración Conjunta de la Cumbre Extraordinaria de Los Países Integrantes del Mecanismo de Diálogo y Concertación de Tuxtla,” <<http://ppp.sre.gob.mx/popups/articleswindow.php?id=46>> (10 August 2005).

¹⁹³ Presidencia de la República, March 2001, “Plan Puebla Panamá Capítulo México Documento base,” <<http://portal.sre.gob.mx/ppp/pdf/capmexparte1.pdf>> (6 September 2005).

¹⁹⁴ Comisión Ejecutiva del PPP, N.D., “Componente Indígena Plan Puebla-Panamá,” <<http://portal.sre.gob.mx/ppp/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=151&Op=page&SubMenu=>> (12 August 2005).

endorsed in June 2002 by the Indigenous Council of Central America (CICA) after participating in discussions on the plan.¹⁹⁵

It is not surprising though that this has not won over the EZLN. Marcos, for example, called the PPP a “separatist project” designed to fragment the country and turn Mexico’s southeast into a repository from which to extract natural resources.¹⁹⁶ The Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality mirrored this criticism, saying that the PPP was created in order to bring neo-liberal economic policies to the south of Mexico as well as Central America. The community also charges that the government was trying to clear indigenous communities out of the region in order to accomplish these goals.¹⁹⁷ The references to neo-liberalism easily explain their attitudes towards the plan. Even though it was ostensibly designed to incorporate indigenous viewpoints, the PPP was still designed by the federal government to promote an economic agenda to which the Zapatistas have long been opposed. The Zapatista attitude is best explained in Marcos’ 1992 pre-uprising appraisal of Mexico, “A Storm and a Prophecy.” It points out that Chiapas is naturally wealthy but loses a great deal of its wealth through resource extraction industries.¹⁹⁸ These include, among other things, ninety-two thousand barrel of petroleum produced each day and one-hundred thousand tons of coffee each year.¹⁹⁹ In stark contrast to these exports, the essay states that coffee producers are paid a mere two-thousand and five hundred pesos. Moreover, two thirds of municipalities do not

¹⁹⁵ IADB, N.D., “Componente Indígena,”

<http://www.iadb.org/ppp/project/projectDetails2.asp?project_id=120> (25 August 2005).

¹⁹⁶ Subcomandante Marcos, “We Are Mexicans... But We Are Also Indigenous,” in *¡Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising*, ed. Žiga Vodonik (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 606.

¹⁹⁷ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, “Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules,” <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (28 July 2005).

¹⁹⁸ Subcomandante Marcos, “A Storm and a Prophecy,” in *Our Word is Our Weapon: Selected Writings*, ed. Jauna Ponce de León (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 22.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 23-24.

have paved roads and the state has the highest mortality rate in Mexico, much of it attributed to curable diseases from a lack of health care.²⁰⁰ This is particularly telling since while the EZLN has often complained about the government's violent intrusions, it also seems to be aggrieved by their neglect as seen in the lack of basic amenities in Chiapas. The essay's indictment of the system is summed up by the statement, "This is what capitalism leaves as payment for everything that it takes away,"²⁰¹ which also summarizes the attitudes of Zapatistas.

These attitudes are reflected in the Zapatistas' views on the Lacandón Jungle. In "A Storm and a Prophecy," Marcos described how campesinos in the towns of Betania and Marques de Comillas who cut wood for fire were harassed and arrested by government agents who often confiscated the wood for their own uses.²⁰² Marcos' observations are backed up by the research of June Nash. Nash notes that in Marques de Comillas the campesinos were allowed to cut down trees to clear space for their crops, but they could not sell the wood. However, government trucks came and loaded up the wood to carry it to market, a practice which spurred a protest in 1991.²⁰³ Marcos' description of this event and the 1991 protest provides a glimpse into settlers and the EZLN's view of the hypocrisy of the government in both the peace process and the dispute over the jungle. Despite siding with conservation organizations, the government allows the very activities that those organizations decry. It should be noted that even after the government established the reserve it was signing logging deals with many of the Lacandón Indians and building roads into the jungle, with the Lacandón Indians

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 23, 24, 25, 31.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 25.

²⁰² Ibid., 35.

²⁰³ June Nash, "The Reassertion of Indigenous Identity: Mayan Responses to State Intervention in Chiapas," Latin America Research Review 30, no.3 (1995): 25-26.

frequently receiving meagre compensation.²⁰⁴ Moreover, the government had plans for a hydroelectric dam along the Usumacinta River in the jungle which was only cancelled in 2003, while the Chiapas social group – the Centre of Economic and Political Investigations of Community Action – has noted other such planned projects in the region including one located on the Santo Domingo River which would flood the Zapatista community of Tierra y Libertad.²⁰⁵ Under such circumstances the EZLN's resistance to relocation and insistence on a locally controlled form of conservation become clearer. The authorities have not lived up to their environmental commitments any more than they have addressed the needs of Chiapas' indigenous population. As a result the EZLN and its base communities have decided to address this issue the same way they have addressed indigenous rights. They have chosen to take control of the matter into their own hands.

In light of this, how the Mexican government's economic plans apply to the Lacandón Jungle should be examined. According to the Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, the head of the Federal Environmental Protection Prosecutor's Office (PROFEPA) said that if they "don't put these areas of great national wealth into order, private enterprise will never invest in them."²⁰⁶ He also said that the reserve would be opened to the army in order to "eliminate the organized crime that is concealed there," and guarantee security for private business in the process. Supposedly

²⁰⁴ Victor Perrera and Robert Bruce, *The Last Lords of Palenque: The Lacandon Maya of the Mexican Rain Forest* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company: 1982), 83, 194-197.

²⁰⁵ Centro de Investigación Económica y Políticas de Acción Comunitarias, 21 August 2002, "The Hydroelectric Megaprojects of the PPPDams for Chiapas! (Second Part)," <<http://www.ciepac.org/bulletins/ingles/ing303.htm>> (7 September 2005); Nick Miles, 4 March 2002, "Mexico's 'devastating' forest loss," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=8506>> (7 September 2005).

²⁰⁶ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (14 August 2005).

these statements were seconded by the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), the Agrarian Prosecutor, and the Secretary of Social Development.²⁰⁷ According to SEMARNAT's website, in 2001 PROFEPA organized 455 security operations collaborating with the Federal Police Force, the Federal Attorney General, security forces, and the Mexican Army.²⁰⁸

Given the continuity between the PRI and the PAN's economic policies and their track record in the jungle, the Zapatistas' suspicion is understandable. Marcelo Antinori, an official at the Inter-American Development Bank, once defended the PPP stating that it was a myth that the program was dreamed up in Washington which "admits neither debate nor change." In fact, he claimed, "the plan is owned by the Mesoamerican nations and it will be whatever they want it to be."²⁰⁹ However, the plan might as well have been dreamed up in Washington as far as the Zapatistas are concerned. As researcher Laura Carlsen points out, the plan's goals were already defined before the indigenous participation component was included; the latter was only added to the plan in 1999 after much protest from communities.²¹⁰ It is unlikely that the Plan could be accepted by the Zapatistas, who already regard the government as disinterested in their needs and concerns, since its participatory component is merely an afterthought tacked on to help obtain the goals of national policy makers.

The government's hypocrisy over preserving the jungle partly explains why the EZLN insist on overseeing the jungle's conservation. Moreover, many of the

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ N.A., N.D., "Unprecedented Action Against Illegal Forestry Activities," <<http://portal.semarnat.gob.mx/comunicacionsocial/acciones/accionestitle03.shtml>> (02 August 2005).

²⁰⁹ Marcelo Antinori, September 2003, "Plan Puebla-Panama: Myths and Reality," <<http://www.iadb.org/idbamerica/index.cfm?thisid=2313>> (24 August 2005).

²¹⁰ Laura Carlsen, "Conservation or privatization? Biodiversity, the global market, and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor," in Mexico in Transition: Neoliberal Globalism, the State and Civil Society, ed. Gerardo Otero, (Black Point: Fernwood Publications, 2004), 65-66.

communities that support the EZLN are more experienced with the landscape of the Lacandón than CI alleges. Taken in concert with the state's failure to handle this matter, the EZLN maintains its distance from the government and sees to matters such as economic organization and conservation independent of any Washington or Mexico City based policy.

The conflict over the government's conservation efforts in the Lacandón Jungle is as much over the political autonomy and indigenous rights as it is conservation. In this case, the Zapatistas' feel that indigenous rights and conservation are inseparable due to their experience with the government's economic policies and response to dissent. The attitude of the Zapatistas has been shaped by continued state violence after the government had signed the San Andrés Peace Accords but refused to respect them. Even after the defeat of the PRI and the withdrawal of the military from Chiapas, the peace process was once more broken apart when legislators changed the Accords' provisions regarding autonomous indigenous government. This made the EZLN as hostile to the Fox government as it had been to the PRI. It regarded accepting the new law as undermining the rights of indigenous people, including the forms of government that it had created to resist repression and the structures that it has used to preserve the jungle. Despite CI's claims, many Zapatista communities have lived in the jungle for decades. Many of these communities have also adopted sustainable agriculture. Moreover, the Zapatistas have been terrorized by an army that has felled trees and are aggrieved by the fact that the government dictates conservation policy while it has been inconsistent at best in maintaining it. The continuity between the economic policies of the governments of the PRI and Vicente Fox feed into this issue by highlighting these inconsistencies.

Fox's government has continued to follow the neoliberal economic policies of the PRI. This includes an infrastructure development plan for the Mexican Southeast (and Central America) called the Plan Puebla Panamá. The Zapatistas have cited it as proof of the Mexican government's continuing adherence to policies designed to deprive them of any political power or rights. While the PPP is ostensibly committed to involving indigenous people, its goals had been defined before consulting them. Furthermore, the PPP reflects ideas the EZLN had long since rejected. At the same time the plan proposes building roads and hydro-electric dams in the very area that Conservation International claims is threatened by human activity. As a result the EZLN continues to exert local political autonomy to protect both its rights and the forest.

Chapter Four: The Zapatistas and the Lacandón, Indigenous Identity in the Conflict Over Land

So far this thesis has concerned itself with the dispute in Montes Azules as it pertains to the Zapatistas' relationship to Conservation International and the Mexican government. These last two groups' have not accepted the concept of indigenous rights as held by the Zapatistas National Liberation Army nor how this has defined the EZLN's implacable stance on the jungle. At the same time these ideas have also become the standards by which the Zapatista rank-and-file judge other indigenous groups. The bitter enmity that marks the dispute over Montes Azules is not only directed towards conservationists and the government, but also to the Lacandón Maya who have sided with the government in order to protect the reserve from invasions by settlers. In order to understand this matter the roots of the EZLN's ideas about indigenous identity must be discussed further.

For the EZLN, being indigenous is based less upon cultural signifiers like language or religion than on political-historical assumptions about the experiences of indigenous Mexicans. These assumptions seem to be based on the Zapatistas' own experiences and as a consequence the EZLN has ignored those indigenous groups that oppose it. Among such groups is the Lacandón Maya, an indigenous group that has resided in and around the reserve since its establishment. There has been much hostility between this group and Zapatista settlers. The conflict between the two can partly be attributed to the policies of CI and the Mexican government in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve which have refused to address the issues which drive settlement in the

jungle. With this in mind, it becomes clear that the EZLN's ideas about being indigenous are greatly limited by the fact that these ideas are largely defined by its political conflict with the government.

As covered in the first chapter, the EZLN initially presented itself as a pro-democracy movement that sought to oust the PRI from government. It eventually came to portray itself as an indigenous movement that was concerned with promoting democracy and indigenous rights in Mexico. Despite the change of its public face, the organization's indigenous character has been a part of the EZLN since its inception. References to it appear in the earliest interviews with the EZLN's leaders, such as a January 1994 interview with Subcomandante Marcos in La Jornada. In it, the interviewer addresses the EZLN with the statement "Compañeros of Chiapas, Indians... if you were brought tortillas, water, pozolito, would you accept it?"²¹¹ What is significant is that the interviewer addresses the group not only with the friendly "compañeros" but as Indians. This is reinforced by a joint interview with several members of the Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee, where a Comandante named Isaac claimed that the EZLN would not be quick to trust the government's peace overtures considering the injustices it had heaped on them "as Indigenous peoples, campesino peoples, and working peoples."²¹² This statement acknowledges the EZLN's indigenous background though it is placed alongside other facets of the groups' identity. As early as May 1994 Marcos described the EZLN as an indigenous movement, such as when he said that its growth was due to the fact that "indigenous peoples realized the necessity of learning to defend

²¹¹ La Jornada & Subcomandante Marcos, "Testimonies of the First Day" in The Zapatista Reader, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), 216.

²¹² La Jornada, 3 & 4 February 1994, "First Interview with EZLN CCRI-CG," <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/ccri_1st_interview.html> (15 August 2005).

themselves.”²¹³ By 1999, Marcos said in a letter to Mumia Abu-Jamal that “We are Mexican and mostly indigenous.”²¹⁴

Given the group’s origins it is highly unlikely that its focus on its indigenous identity was only an innovation that followed the rebellion. The overwhelming majority of its members and general command are indigenous. While its origins lie partly in a group of Maoist urban guerrillas who travelled to the jungle to promote revolution, the guerrillas only took root among the jungle’s indigenous communities because they were welcomed by the communities’ leaders who had grown exasperated at the failure of political protest in the face of military repression.²¹⁵ According to Marcos, the group initially had a political and military structure similar to most other guerrilla movements in Latin America during the sixties and seventies. Moreover, its objective was to overthrow the national government, take power, and was concerned with “ideological and physical strength” of the organization.²¹⁶ Marcos has at times claimed that this system of indigenous self-government always existed, but on other occasions he has argued that it was created out of necessity in response to state neglect.²¹⁷ Whatever version is the most accurate, the importance of this system of self-government helps to explain the group’s insistence that San Andrés be adopted in its original form, since many of its points involved providing legal backing and material support for this system. Most importantly, Marcos claims that the original vertical structure of the EZLN was phased out as more

²¹³ Pablo Salazar Devereaux, Ana Laura Hernández, Eugenio Aquilera, and Gustavo Rodríguez, 11 May 1994, “Interview with Subcomandante Marcos,” <<http://flagblackened.net/revolt/ezln/anmarin.html>> (16 August 2005).

²¹⁴ Subcomandante Marcos to Mumia Abu-Jamal, 24 April 1999, “Letter to Mumia Abu-Jamal,” in *Our Word is Our Weapon: selected writings*, ed. Juana Ponce de León (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 192.

²¹⁵ Neil Harvey, 164.

²¹⁶ Pablo Salazar Devereaux, et. al., 11 May 1994, “Interview with Subcomandante Marcos,” <<http://flagblackened.net/revolt/ezln/anmarin.html>> (16 August 2005).

²¹⁷ Ibid.

indigenous people began to join the organisation, and the EZLN found that it could not accomplish anything without the approval of its popular base.²¹⁸

The EZLN also regards indigenous identity as rooted in the land itself. In his letter to Mumia Abu Jamal, Marcos said that the government only saw business in the land whereas the indigenous Zapatistas “see our history written in these lands.”²¹⁹ This theme crops up again when he describes how the Zapatistas are “‘people of colour’,” who are brown like the earth.²²⁰ These statements come out of Mayan creation mythology. In it, the first men and women were created from corn by the gods.²²¹ According to the myth, after creating humanity, the gods told them where the world was located and why. By claiming that the Maya possess a special spiritual truth handed down to them by the divine which has been threatened by the political establishment in Mexico, Marcos gives the EZLN’s struggle to preserve an indigenous way of life a religious significance.²²²

These remarks seem to shine a light on some of the assumptions implicit in Zapatismo. One of these is the belief that the EZLN’s vision of indigenous identity is shared by all indigenous people in Mexico. In the Third Declaration From the Lacandón Jungle, the EZLN declares that the only way to properly incorporate Mexico’s indigenous population into the nation is to recognize “the characteristics of their own social, political, and cultural organization. Autonomy is not separation; it is integration of the most humble and forgotten minorities in Mexico.”²²³ The Fifth Declaration carries this

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Marcos to Mumia Abu-Jamal, 24 April 1999, “Letter to Mumia Abu-Jamal,” 192.

²²⁰ Ibid., 193.

²²¹ Marcos to Mumia Abu-Jamal, 24 April 1999, “Letter to Mumia Abu-Jamal,” 193; Subcomandante Marcos, “Democratic Teachers and Zapatista Dreams,” in *Our Word is Our Weapon: selected writings*, ed. Juana Ponce de León (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 274-275.

²²² Subcomandante Marcos, “Democratic Teachers and Zapatista Dreams,” 274-275.

²²³ EZLN, “Third Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2000), 236.

theme further when it states that the Accords were not only the product of the EZLN's demands, but also a product of those demands made by representatives of Mexico's indigenous people. According to the Declaration, by failing to accept the Accords and turning military pressure on the EZLN, Zedillo's government had declared war not only on the organization, but on all indigenous people as well.²²⁴ These points are consistently re-emphasized throughout the document so as to give the impression that the EZLN's struggle is that of all Mexico's indigenous peoples, an idea made explicit by the statement that Zapatistas stand "next to and behind the Indian peoples"²²⁵

While there is some basis for this assumption, the situation is not necessarily as simple as the EZLN makes it out to be. In support of its view, the revised indigenous law passed by Congress in April of 2003 was rejected by fourteen of Mexico's thirty-one states when it was sent out to them for ratification. Those fourteen states had the highest proportion of indigenous people in the country.²²⁶ Moreover, the National Indigenous Congress rejected the law due to the changes made by congress and claimed that not only did it not represent the agreement signed between the government and the EZLN, but that it legitimized a strategy of ethnocide.²²⁷ This sentiment echoes those of the Fifth Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle regarding law and indigenous solidarity.

However, in spite of these facts there are others which contradict the EZLN's claim.

²²⁴ CCRI-CG, "Fifth Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle," in *¡Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising*, ed. Žiga Vodovnik (Oakland: AK Press, 2004), 670-671.

²²⁵ Ibid., 671.

²²⁶ BBC World Service, 15 August 2001, "Indigenous Mexicans Reject New Laws," <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1492124.stm>> (18 August 2005).

²²⁷ Fredy Martín Pérez, 01 May 2001, "Rompe EZLN dialogo con Fox," <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5625&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=01-MAY-01> (15 September 2005); Jorge Herrera y Jorge Teherán, 28 April 2001, "Aprobarán PRI y AN ley indígena," <http://www2.eluniversal.com.mx/pls/impreso/web_histo_primera.despliega?var=5596&var_sub_actual=-&var_fecha=28-ABR-01> (15 September 2005).

For starters, the EZLN's 1994 uprising was not supported by all of Chiapas' indigenous communities. While travelling through the highlands, researchers George A. Collier and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello discovered that there were many communities who had opposed the uprising from its outset. For example, some Tzotzils in the region referred to the Zapatistas as "troublemakers" or "bandits," which in the context of the region's history serve as explicit references to the banditry that plagued the countryside during the Mexican Revolution.²²⁸ Others in the communities of Chamula and Zinacantán invoked Mayan mythology in disparaging the Zapatistas. They claimed that the organization's recruitment drive in the mountains was blocked by two ancestor deities: a giant snake and whirlwind. It is important to note that these communities had remained loyal to the PRI during the 1994 rebellion²²⁹ which undermines the EZLN's claims in the Fifth Declaration that it stands alongside all of Mexico's indigenous people. More recently, in 2004 there was an incident near Zinacantán where a number of Zapatista supporters were ejected from a nearby settlement when the community cut off their water service. The Zapatistas had come to the village to drum up support for the EZLN's cause, but residents complained that they had not contributed money to the area's water system. The Zapatistas for their part claimed that they were attacked because the villagers, who at this point were now loyal to the PRD, took umbrage with their campaigning for the EZLN.²³⁰ What makes this event striking is that the PRD was the only major political party to oppose the changes to the indigenous law in 2003, yet its

²²⁸ George A. Collier and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello, Basta! Land & the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas (Oakland: Food First Books, 1999), 10.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ BBC World Service, 26 April 2004, "Zapatista Supporters Return Home," <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/3659727.htm>> (18 August 2005).

supporters in one indigenous village were not necessarily pre disposed towards supporting the EZLN itself.

Another significant facet of this matter is the socio-economic inequality that the EZLN rails against is partly due to stratification within indigenous communities. Collier and Quaratiello have observed that following the 1994 uprising people have been prone to idealizing indigenous peasants while ignoring the economic inequalities that exist among them.²³¹ To cite one example, politics in indigenous communities was often controlled by local bosses, known as *caciques*. As described by geographer June Nash, the *caciques* controlled the local distribution of resources from the Indigenous National Institute (INI). In the process they maintained their personal power as well as the power of the PRI.²³² At the same time, the *caciques* also violently suppressed political opposition. In the case of Amatenango del Valle in the 1970s, where the leader of a women's pottery co-op was assassinated at the behest of the *cacique* for running against him in a local election.²³³ These functionaries have further exacerbated such stratification through the practice of using the banner of Mayan tradition as a justification for expelling anyone they deem as falling outside of local traditions in order to seize their lands, a practice that began in the 1970s. While visiting a number of jungle colonies during the 1990s, June Nash found that a good number of the settlers within the jungle were victims of the *caciques*' predations.²³⁴ Despite these numerous examples that contradict the EZLN's picture of indigenous unity against the government, the

²³¹ Collier and Quaratiello, 10.

²³² June Nash, Mayan Visions: The Quest For Autonomy in an Age of Globalization (New York: Routledge, 2001), 50.

²³³ June Nash, "The Reassertion of Indigenous Identity: Mayan Response to State Intervention in Chiapas" Latin American Research Review 30, no. 3 (1995):16.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 20; Nash, Mayan Visions. 115-116.

organisation mentions none of them. Its silence on the matter recalls Conservation International's failure to recognize opposition to its policies in the reserve. However, with the EZLN this behaviour is all the more striking since it is not a foreign NGO whose ideas are formulated outside of Mexico, but a grassroots political organization operating in the very political landscape that it seeks to change.

In light of this it is worth mentioning that the Fifth Declaration From the Lacandón Jungle lists the indigenous groups that the EZLN claims to stand alongside. Among these names is a group known as 'Lacandón.'²³⁵ The name "Lacandón" has been used to refer to various Maya groups that inhabited the Lacandón jungle since the beginning of the Spanish conquest. Currently it applies to a group of Maya that scholars believe migrated to the jungle in the eighteenth century from an area around Lake Petén in Guatemala, though this ancestry is still somewhat uncertain due to the process of cultural change that has shaped the Lacandones' culture over time.²³⁶ The current group lived in small clans throughout the jungle and had very limited contact with the outside world until after the Second World War, when the Mexican government's land reform policies began bringing in settlers from outside the region.²³⁷ In the conflict over Montes Azules they fall squarely on the side of the government and against the Zapatistas. There have been reports of confrontations between the Lacandones and the settlers, the most notable being the incident in the community of Neuvo San Rafeal.

On 10 April 2003, some forty Chol and Lacandón Maya arrived in the community on a government boat armed with machetes and pistols and threatened the residents,

²³⁵ CCRI-CG, "Fifth Declaration," 671.

²³⁶ R. John McGee, *Watching Lacandon Maya Lives* (Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 2002) 7; Joel W. Palka, *Unconquered Lacandon Maya: Ethnohistory and Archaeology of Indigenous Culture Change* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 27, 72.

²³⁷ McGee, 24.

ordering them to leave. They said that the Regional Lacandón Assembly had decided to forcibly evict the community within days and this was Nuevo San Rafael's second warning.²³⁸ Many of the Zapatistas' supporters outside of the jungle base communities took this as evidence of the government's "counterinsurgency strategy."²³⁹ Yet the EZLN, who had never shied away from attacking the government, remained conspicuously silent on the incident. In fact there seems to be no mention of the Lacandones in official Zapatista statements outside of the Fifth Declaration, let alone their conflict with the settlers.

It is illuminating to contrast the official stance of the Zapatistas on this matter with that of the settler communities who have been the most vocal on the issue, such as the Autonomous Municipality of Ricardo Flores Magón. The municipality had mentioned the Lacandones extensively in the February 2002 letter where it presented its history of the jungle and its grievances. In it, the community refers to the government's land concession to the Lacandón Maya as a "latifundio,"²⁴⁰ a term for the large agricultural estates of Mexico, which casts the Lacandón concession in a disparaging light by equating it with the plantations that deprived peasants of viable agricultural land. In a letter dated 25 March 2002, the community also claimed that the Lacandones' had been coached by the government and businessmen in their calls for the eviction of the settlers. Thus, they were being manipulated by the pillars of the Mexican political

²³⁸ Chiapas Media Project/Promedios de Comunicación Comunitaria, Mexico Solidarity Network, the Community Human Rights Defenders Network, CIEPAC, CAPISE, Estación Libre, Canoa Producciones, Canal 6 de Julio A.C., COPAL A.C., and Producciones Marca Diablo A.C., N.D., "UUSC Partnert Urges Action to Stop Eviction From Inidgenous Mexican Village," <http://www.uusc.org/news/Chiapas04.3003_2.html> (19 August 2005).

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm>> (19 August 2005).

system.²⁴¹ The most telling statement though comes from the Municipality's account of the jungle around the time of conquest. The letter states that the jungle was once inhabited by the "true Lacandón...a dignified, rebel, warrior people," who resisted the Spanish conquest for one-hundred and fifty years until they were wiped out in 1695.²⁴² The letter then goes on to relate how in 1700 a group of Caribe indigenous from Campeche and Mérida arrived in the jungle. It claims that they experienced no problems with the Conquistadores, who in turn felt that both groups were peaceable and obeyed their rules. Finally the letter states that in 1971, around the time of the establishment of the Lacandón land concession the government changed their name to 'Lacandón' and tried to present them as the direct descendents of the forests' original inhabitants.²⁴³ Other settlers have followed this political line and called the Lacandón "Caribes" in reference their supposed outsider origins.²⁴⁴

The settlers' views of the Lacandón Maya reflect the underlying beliefs and tensions that drive this conflict. By claiming that the Lacandones desire to evict them is purely due to manipulation by government officials and businessmen the settlers deny the Lacandones' free agency. This reinforces their belief that the conflict is purely between indigenous Mexicans and the political establishment. In turn this belief is also buttressed by their claims that the Lacandón were invited to settle jungle by the Spanish. Even the nomenclature they use, such as the insistence on calling the jungle's original inhabitants

²⁴¹ Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality, 25 March 2002, "A Shadow of Death is Being Raise in the Heart of Our Land, of Our Mother, of Our Selva," <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/2002/amc/rfmMARCH.html> (19 August 2005).

²⁴² Municipio Autónomo en Rebeldía Ricardo Flores Magón, 28 February 2002, "Intento de desalojo de biósfera de Montes Azules," <http://www.laneta.apc.org/sclc/urgencia/020226marfm.htm> (19 August 2005).

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Mark Stevenson, 4 August 2002, "Tropical Rainforest Sprouts Battleground," <http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=13851> (21 September 2005).

the “true Lacandón” and claiming that the naming of its current inhabitants was only a ploy by the government, feeds into this mythology. Just as the EZLN asserted its own legitimacy in its emphasis on its history of rebellion, the settlers paint the Lacandón Maya as collaborators in order to deny them their historical legitimacy. Having questioned the legitimacy with which they hold their name as well as their reasons for demanding that the settlers’ be expelled from the reserve, they now question the Lacandones’ status as Mexicans as well. One of the running themes of the Zapatistas’ rhetoric is that historically, whatever government was in power, the Mexican government has mostly served foreign interests rather than those of the nation.²⁴⁵ As such, any statement about the Lacandones’ national origins likely reflects on Zapatismo’s latent patriotic/nationalist tendencies. Furthermore, it serves as an attempt on the part of the settlers to question the Lacandón Maya’s status as Mexicans.

However, most of the arguments listed above do not hold up against historical fact. The current Lacandón group apparently did migrate to the area some years ago. But contrary to the Municipality’s claims this migration had occurred after the Spanish had depopulated the jungle of an earlier group of Ch’olti speaking Maya through conquest and resettlement.²⁴⁶ This interpretation is more logical considering the effort that the Spanish put into destroying the texts and artefacts of traditional Mayan culture. Moreover, though the Spanish had made an effort to pacify the jungle’s inhabitants, after this effort they showed almost no interest in colonizing the jungle due to its unsuitability

²⁴⁵ CGRI-GI, “First Declaration From the Lacandon Jungle,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder Mouth’s Press, 2000), 218-219.

²⁴⁶ Pelka, 74.

for agricultural land and the apparent lack of extractable resources such as gold.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, there is no evidence to support the charge that the government gave this group of Maya the “Lacandón” appellation in the 1970s in order to lay claim to the forest. Nowhere in the historical record are they ever referred to as Caribes. Journalist Victor Perera distinctly recalls the Indians being referred to as “Lacandones” during his childhood in 1930s including some who were on display under this name at a 1935 national fair held by the Guatemalan dictator, General Jorge Ubico.²⁴⁸ This demonstrates that it was a common name for the group well before the Mexican government got much involved in the jungle.

Based on the historiography of research on the Lacandón Maya, it is more likely that the name comes from the assumption that the current Lacandón Maya group had inhabited the Lacandón jungle since conquest. Both Perera and linguist Robert Bruce state in their 1970s research on the Lacandón Maya that while the group’s origins are in dispute, they are believed to be direct descendents of the original Lacandón Maya who survived in isolated communities in the jungle. Their reasoning is based on the degree to which Lacandón culture resembled pre-conquest Mayan culture, particularly their language which bears a recognizable similarity to portions of ancient Maya codices and inscriptions from Palenque. They also noted that the group had no migration myths and regarded as the centre of the Earth either one of the two nearest ancient Maya ceremonial centres, Palenque in the North and Yaxchilán in the South, both said to be where the gods

²⁴⁷ Robert Bruce, *The Last Lords of Palenque: The Lacandon Mayas of the Mexican Rain Forest* (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 11; David Luhnnow, 18 December 1998, “Mexico’s Lacandon Indians Caught Between Two Eras,” <<http://forests.org/archive/samerica/laclosei.htm>> (19 August 2003); McGee, 4-7.

²⁴⁸ Perera, 36-37.

supposedly created man.²⁴⁹ This was the widely held opinion of previous scholars such as Alfred Tozzer as well as Frans and Gertrude Duby Blom, who believed the Lacandonés' they represented a remnant of ancient, pre-contact Maya peoples.²⁵⁰ This belief seems to have been partly fostered by the fact that they lived near a set of ancient Maya ruins, and because their culture lacked any apparent European influence.²⁵¹ However, according to archaeologist Joel Palka, recent scholarly opinion on the Lacandón now holds that they likely descended from Chiapan Yucatec Maya or migrated from the Yucatán Peninsula in Petén due to the fact that they speak Yucatec Maya.²⁵² That the settlers assume there is something sinister to this discrepancy rather than the mere imperfections of historical research is indicative of just how deep their bitterness over the reserve runs.

Another telling aspect of the settlers' viewpoint is how their image of the Lacandón conveniently runs counter to the EZLN's own self-image of standing up to the five hundred years of political oppression. The settlers' historical views set the Lacandón up as outsiders who are the pawns of Mexico's power brokers. Yet considering both the history and geography involved, this point appears to be a nebulous one. The settlers never state where the alleged Caribes came from while scholarly opinion is uncertain whether they come from the Yucatán peninsula or Colonial period Yucatec Maya populations in the jungle. Even if they came from the peninsula around Lake Petén it is uncertain as to when this particular Lacandón migrated to the jungle, save that missions

²⁴⁹ Bruce, 10-13.

²⁵⁰ Alfred Tozzer, A Comparative Study of the Mayas and the Lacandonés (New York: AMS Press, 1978), 6, 12-13, 33; McGee, 20, 23; Palka, 19-20, 22, 23-24.

²⁵¹ Palka, 1.

²⁵² Palka, 27, 46.

only began encountering them in 1850 and 1860.²⁵³ That they insist on the definitiveness of the group's geographical origins despite the nebulousness of historical research and the fact that the Lacandón Maya's ethnic origins indicate that they are Yucatec Maya rather than Caribes draws attention to Zapatismo's nationalist tendencies discussed earlier. The insistence of the settlers on claiming ethnic and national origins that may not even apply seem to be an extension of the Zapatistas' nationalist tendencies that were discussed earlier. The settlers' claims that the Lacandón are merely outsiders seems to parallel the EZLN's belief that the Mexican government is more concerned with profiteering than the good of the nation. Since the Lacandón Indians have aligned themselves with the Federal government, the settlers have taken it on themselves to impose their own definitions of the group according to Zapatista ideas regarding the nature of the conflict in the reserve.

The EZLN's questioning the national and ethnic origins of the Lacandón involve an attempt to apply a measure of authenticity to the group against the Zapatista standard of indigenusness. However, this rhetoric buys into an old myth that has often plagued anthropological study of indigenous cultures. This myth was identified and critiqued by ethnographer John M. Watanabe in his study of the Chimalteco Maya of Guatemala. According to Watanabe one of the great mistakes of anthropologists in the past was to view that Mayan culture from an "essentialist" perspective. This perspective held that there was some original, primordial Mayan identity; were it to change this would make the group "less Mayan."²⁵⁴ Watanabe says that his awareness of this perspective began when he set out to study the Chimalteco. Upon his arrival in their community, he found that the Chimalteco did not define their identity according to an allegiance to a set of old

²⁵³ McGee, 11.

²⁵⁴ John M. Watanabe, Maya Saints and Souls in a Changing World (Austin: University of Texas, 1992), 5-6.

traditions. Instead they defined themselves according to long-standing community relationships and local reputation.²⁵⁵ The importance of Watanabe's observations is that a culture is always contingent upon the meanings that its practitioners give it. Attempting to assign a fixed value to cultural identity not only ignores the nature of cultural change, but how culture itself is subjectively defined. Up until the 1980s, this problem was prevalent in scholarship on the Lacandón Indians, where scholars frequently believed they represented the descendents of the ancient Maya who built the great cities seen in lowland ruins.²⁵⁶ As a consequence, the Lacandón Maya were romanticized as being free of modern influence and frequently in danger of losing their culture due to the sudden penetration of outsiders into the jungle.²⁵⁷

The Zapatistas' definition of indigenous identity in terms of political rights disproves this narrow focus on adherence to ancient traditions. Yet the Zapatistas themselves also engage in similarly narrow thinking, and thus their stance on indigenous identity is rather inconsistent. The settlers' remarks regarding the Lacandones' historical origins and political legitimacy make it clear that they believe that being an indigenous Mexican involves a degree of authenticity. This, in turn, would also explain why the EZLN fails to mention the Lacandón or any indigenous group that opposes its goals in its official statements. Groups like the Lacandón do not fit into the image of being indigenous that it has presented in its statements. However, the ELZN does not attack those groups that do not fit this image the way the settlers do. Instead it merely does not make mention of them. That way the organisation's portrayal of utter solidarity among Mexico's indigenous people remains intact. Yet the image that the organisation has

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 17-18.

²⁵⁶ Pelka, 1, 26.

²⁵⁷ Tozzer, 6, 12-13, 26-28; McGee, 23-24, 31-32; Pelka, 22-24.

presented of all of Mexico's indigenous people arrayed against government oppression and corruption, a product of its history dealing with those problems, does not acknowledge that indigenous people in the country have many different interests. In so far as the jungle and the Montes Azules reserve is concerned, the Lacandón have opted to support the government and the reserve not simply due to ecology, but because the preservation of a large area of the jungle allows them to maintain their way of life which has adapted to jungle landscape.²⁵⁸

Given this situation, it is not hard to understand why they have sided with the government and demanded that the settlers be ejected. Many Lacandón leaders have claimed that the settlers' are felling trees and destroying the material basis of their way of life.²⁵⁹ On the other hand, it is not so clear whether this objection is true for to the entirety of the Lacandón Maya. Since the establishment of the land concession in 1972, a conflict has emerged among the Lacandón surrounding the issues of government logging activities and the activity of evangelical missionaries. The conversion of many Lacandón to evangelical Christianity led not only to a rejection of aspects of their traditional culture, but often was accompanied by them signing logging contracts with the government. One of these converts, José Pepe Chan Bol, set himself up as the representative for all of the Lacandón despite the fact that those who held onto old Lacandón culture opposed the logging concessions.²⁶⁰ During their stay with the

²⁵⁸ Bruce Rich, 30 April 1982, "Time Running Out For Mexico's Last Tropical Forest," <<http://209.200.101.189/publications/csq/csq-article.cfm?id=65>> (20 August 2005); David Luhnnow, 18 December 1998, "Mexico's Lacandon Caught Between Two Eras," <<http://forests.org/archive/samerica/laclose.htm>> (20 August 2005); Mark Steveson, 4 August 2002, "Tropical Rainforest Sprouts Battleground," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=13851>> (20 August 2005; Weinberg, 102-103.

²⁵⁹ Mark Steveson, 4 August 2002, "Tropical Rainforest Sprouts Battleground," <<http://forests.org/articles/reader.asp?linkid=13851>> (30 September 2005).

²⁶⁰ Bruce, 17, 19, 21, 25-27.

Lacandón, Victor Perera and Robert Bruce travelled to Mexico City to help a Lacandón scholar named K'in Yuk deliver a petition to the President protesting José Pepe's attempts to cut the forest's mahogany.²⁶¹ The great irony of this is that Conservation International and the Federal Government have presented the Lacandón as the best hope for conserving the jungle based on their traditional agriculture when the majority of them have dropped many of their traditional economic pursuits.²⁶²

This also brings the discussion back to the failure of the conservationists and the Federal Government's approach to handling the jungle. Though CI and the government have tried to portray the Lacandón as "stewards" of the jungle based on a romanticized vision of a traditional culture and way of life, it is one that most Lacandón no longer follow. Meanwhile, Lacandón political leaders acquiesce in supporting logging concessions in the region. The settlers aligned with the Zapatistas are portrayed as environmental villains, newcomers whose way of life threatens the jungle. However, a great number of the illegal settlements pre-date both the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve as well as the establishment of the territories of the Lacandón. Some have developed sustainable forms of agriculture despite conservationists' claims that the settlers are only destroying the forest. The practices are also consistent with the EZLN's professed ideas and practice of self-governance that the organisation says has guided its supporters since at least 1980s. CI's claims of involving local populations are difficult to believe, given how hostile the two populations in the reserve are towards one another.

While the ELZN claims to speak for all Indians, its conflict with the government has led it to define indigenous culture in terms of that conflict and what side a group falls

²⁶¹ Perera and Bruce, 83-86, 140-143.

²⁶² Reuters, 18 December 1998, "Mexico's Last Indians Caught Between Two Worlds," <<http://forests.org/archive/samerica/laclosei.htm>>, (24 September 2005).

on. It primarily defines “indigenous” based on a set of historical rights that have been denied to its members by the Mexican government and defines the struggle in the Montes Azules conflict in those terms. Furthermore, it portrays the conflict over these rights as one in which all of Mexico’s indigenous groups are united together against the government. Yet the EZLN has never had the unanimous support of Mexico’s indigenous groups. In the case of Montes Azules, it is opposed by the Lacandón Maya, an indigenous group that claims that the settlers are damaging the jungle, which the Lacandón rely upon to support themselves. The EZLN’s popular base in turn has lashed out at the Lacandón for not being truly indigenous because they support the Mexican government, regardless of the Lacandón’s reasons for doing so. Meanwhile the EZLN seems to ignore the conflict in its public statements as though it does not wish to compromise the image it has presented of it being in solidarity with all of Mexico’s indigenous groups, particularly when it comes to opposing the government. All of this only emphasizes the failure of the federal government and CI’s conservation policies. By excluding the settlers from any substantive decision making over the reserve, they have further polarized the conflict between the settlers and the Lacandón, reinforcing the grievances that drove the EZLN’s rebellion in the first place. As such the long standing conflict with the government continues to define the relations between the Zapatista settlers and the Lacandón, ensuring that they will remain hostile to each other as the government fails to come to terms with the Zapatistas’ demands for control over their own political and economic decision making.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored how the conflict between the settlers in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve and the efforts of Conservation International is primarily driven by the EZLN's ideological conception of Mexico's indigenous people. Despite CI's portrayal of the situation as merely being a struggle between efforts to preserve the jungle's fragile ecosystem and fulfilling the needs of Mayan settlers, the actual situation has proven to be much more complex. The settlers and the EZLN object to the government's presence in the reserve on the basis that it has continually ignored their rights as indigenous people and because the government's actions already threaten the jungle's integrity. Its military maneuvers have already felled large swatches of trees within the jungle and its development projects aimed at the south-east of Mexico would guarantee a disastrous impact on the land. As a result the Zapatistas see guarding indigenous rights and preserving the jungle as mutually inclusive. This view is informed by their longstanding conflict with the government over the matter of indigenous rights, or at least the version of those rights championed by the EZLN.

Outside of the main arguments over the Reserve, the roots of the conflict over Montes Azules lie in the role of land in Mexico's political history. The rebel leader Zapata created a political platform based on the needs of the Mexican peasant class from which he came. That platform called for land redistribution as well as local control and became the rallying cry for agrarian rebels across the country. Consequently the Mexican political establishment eventually adopted the land reform aspects of the plan in order to maintain stability in the countryside. This program was combined with the establishment of a corporatist state ruled by a single party. This system managed to end

the factionalism of the decade of 1910 to 1920 as to reduce the political unrest of the period, at least until the student uprisings in 1968. However, this system was limited by the fact that it failed to significantly change the overall socioeconomic conditions of Mexico. When the government abandoned land reform in the 1980s the old stability was threatened by agrarian unrest, forcing the government to rely more and more on military force to maintain order. One of the end results of this situation was the formation and eventual rebellion of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, a guerrilla army formed by indigenous farmers in Chiapas. Originally it provided a means defence against the military. Later it became a way to launch a rebellion and thus articulate their plight and demands to the rest of the country.

It was under these circumstances that the EZLN butted heads with the Washington DC based environmental group Conservation International. Despite CI's ostensible support for local control over conservation efforts neither it nor the EZLN have co-operated with each other on the matter of settlers within the reserve and their potential impact on the jungle. This conflict stems from the two organizations' substantially differing worldviews. The EZLN's frame of reference comes from the daily living circumstances of the peasants of south-eastern Chiapas and ideas about the history of indigenous people in Mexico, which are partly based on the Mexican Revolution. CI's views are shaped by a scientific viewpoint, which favours value-free detachment and treating problems as technical matters. As a result, CI favours assigning single causes to the environmental problems in the reserve, such as peasant agriculture, while ignoring that its ally, the Mexican government, has contributed much to deforestation through its own actions. Following this reasoning, CI's officials actually denigrate the very concepts

of indigenous identity that the EZLN and the settlers adhere to, and with it the idea that conservation efforts should be controlled locally, something that CI publicly supports. It also means that CI ignores the economic problems that drive settlement into reserve areas. In the process CI cuts off any opportunity for cooperation with the Zapatistas because it rejects addressing the issues that matter most to the EZLN.

Whatever obstacle that CI's approach poses to resolving the dispute in the reserve, its conflict with the settlers is in some ways a proxy of the EZLN's larger conflict with the Mexican government. The Zapatista National Liberation Army was originally formed in response to the military's suppression of independent political organizing in Chiapas during the 1970s and 1980s. The PRI government responded to the 1994 rebellion with military force, but was forced to back off due to protests from Mexican civil society. Yet the government continued to use the military against the Zapatistas, even after signing the San Andrés Accords with the EZLN in 1996. This caused the EZLN to refuse to negotiate with the government until after Vicente Fox was elected President in 2001.

Fox's election opened the way to the EZLN travelling to Mexico City to see that the indigenous rights bill stemming out of the accords was passed and possibly start new negotiations with the government thereafter. However, the watering down of certain key provisions, especially those regarding autonomous government for Mexico's indigenous people, by deputies of Fox's National Action Party and the PRI led the EZLN to cut off all contact with the government and return to the jungle in protest. The issue of autonomous overlaps with the EZLN's objections to conservation programs in the reserve as they are regarded as the product of a distant body of planners infringing on the rights of indigenous people. Another important factor is the inconsistencies between

government's support of CI and the large infrastructure projects it has planned for southeastern Chiapas in order to foster commerce in Southern Mexico and Central America. These projects would both displace communities in the region and damage the jungle through the construction of roads and hydroelectric dams. As a result the Zapatistas' conclude that upholding their ideals is also necessary to protect the jungle, the land upon which they depend.

It is clear that this conflict has been shaped by, and in turn even strengthened, the EZLN's ideas of what constitutes indigenous identity. At the same time it has led them to place sharp limits in applying this identity to all of Mexico's indigenous people. The EZLN built up an indigenous identity based on a concept of indigenous rights derived from the program of Emiliano Zapata and its partial adoption by the Mexican state. The EZLN's various experiences with neglect and violence on the part of state has led it to set itself up as a defender of these rights against the power of the state. However, the EZLN fails to acknowledge that not all indigenous people in Mexico, or even Chiapas, necessarily support it. Many indigenous communities opposed the 1994 uprising due to their allegiance to the PRI, and at least one Zapatista community that was loyal to the PRD was not welcoming to Zapatista activists.

With this in mind it is not surprising that the EZLN shows no signs of acknowledging that the Lacandón Maya are opposed to its efforts in Montes Azules. The Lacandón have sided with the government because they regard the reserve as necessary to protect their land from degradation by settlers. While the EZLN's official statements never make mention of this, the Lacandones' position is acknowledged by the settler population who regard them as having been manipulated by the government. The settlers

even question whether Lacandón Maya are truly indigenous. The settlers' regard for the Lacandón as 'puppets' with a false claim to their name, because they will not accept that other indigenous groups have interests that may clash with their own.

The fight in the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, along with the EZLN's resistance to the demands of Conservation International and the Mexican government, illustrates how conceptions of identity are shaped. In this case, an indigenous rebel movement reacts to matters of resource and conservation issues in terms of its self-anointed role as a defender of indigenous rights against a government that has often ignored such issues or treated those drawing attention to them with brutality. In the EZLN's view being indigenous requires the right to autonomous government and control over resources. The government's record on conservation confirms and hardens the EZLN's support for local and regional autonomy as well as strengthens the organization's resolve that these issues are central to indigenous identity and survival. The EZLN sees environmental groups like Conservation International as not that much different in nature from the government since these groups ignore and even denigrate the concepts of indigenous identity that the EZLN has championed, while hypocritically proclaiming in their public reports that they always work with indigenous people. Submitting to CI's demands in the EZLN's view would ultimately be asking it to surrender its identity. This would not only be dangerous to the jungle but would represent a threat to the survival of indigenous identity in southern Mexico.

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Appendix One – Areas that Conservation International Has Identified As Critical For Conserving the Lacandón Jungle

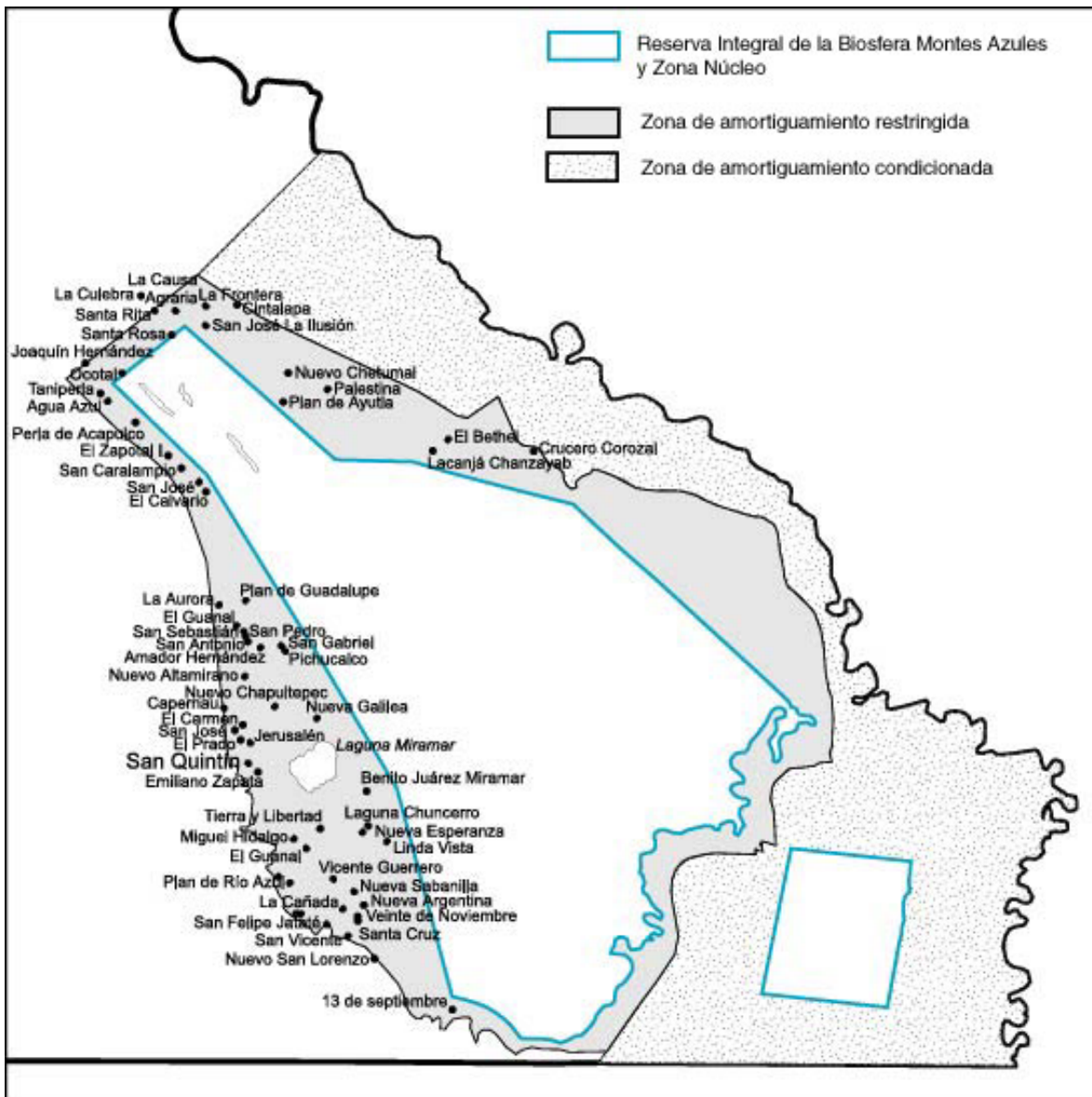
1 Palestina	19 Ixcán	37 Agua Azul	55 San Marcos	73 Pancho Villa
2 Nueva Argentina	20 Nuevo San Andres (La Paz)	38 Nuevo Corozal	56 Taniperia	74 1o De Enero
3 Frontera Corozal	21 San Gregorio	39 Carton, El	57 Maravilla Tenejapa	75 Nuevo Caracol
4 Nuevo Chapultepec	22 Indio Pedro	40 Veinte De Noviembre	58 El Piru	76 Sol Paraiso, El
5 Emiliano Zapata	23 Pichucalco	41 San Jose La Ilusion	59 Puerto Rico	77 Ojo De Agua La P
6 Metzaboc	24 Palestina	42 Nueva Esperanza	60 San Caralampio La Morena	78 Salvador Allende
7 Naha	25 Nuevo Israel	43 Linda Vista	61 Laguna Ocotal	79 Jardin, El
8 Chamizal	26 Villa Flores	44 Vicente Guerrero	62 Frontera, La	80 Champitas, Las
9 San Antonio Esco	27 Villa Las Rosas	45 San Antonio Mira	63 Causa Agraria, La	81 Macedonia
10 Chansayab Lacanja	28 Nubes, Las	46 Nuevo Amador Hernandez	64 Rio Colorado	82 Pichucalco
11 Amatitlan	29 Laguna Chuncerro	47 Benemerito De Las Americas	65 San Pablo	83 Avellanal

12 Candelaria	30 Tierra Y Libertad	48 Zamora Pico De Oro	66 Rio El Cedro	84 Ibarra
13 Plan De Ayutla	31 Miguel Hidalgo Y Costilla	49 Reforma Agraria	67 Carmen, El	85 V. Flor De Marquez
14 Yaxchilan	32 Cañada, La	50 Loma Bonita	68 Chavin	86 Busilja
15 Amador Hernandez	33 San Felipe Jatate	51 Bonampak (Zona Arqueologica)	69 San Gabriel	87 Nazareth
16 Benito Juarez Miramar	34 San Vicente	52 Nuevo Galilea	70 Guanaj, El	88 Santa Elena
17 Plan De Rio Azul	35 Santa Rita	53 Roberto Barrios I	71 Santa Cruz	89 Quetzalcoatl
18 Nuevo Sabanilla	36 San Quintin	54 Amatitlan li	72 Nuevo F. Corozal	90 Niños Heroes li

Two tables from Conservation Executive Summary of Selva Lacandona: Siglo XXI Estrategia Conjunta Para Biodiversidad listing critical locations for conserving the Lacandón jungle. All locations are listed in order of priority.²⁶³

²⁶³ “Resume Ejecutivo - Selva Lacandona Siglo XXI Estrategia Conjunta Para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad” <<http://www.ci-mesamerica.orgPDFS/resumen.PRF>> (30 June 2006).

Appendix Two – Maps of Communities within Montes Azules

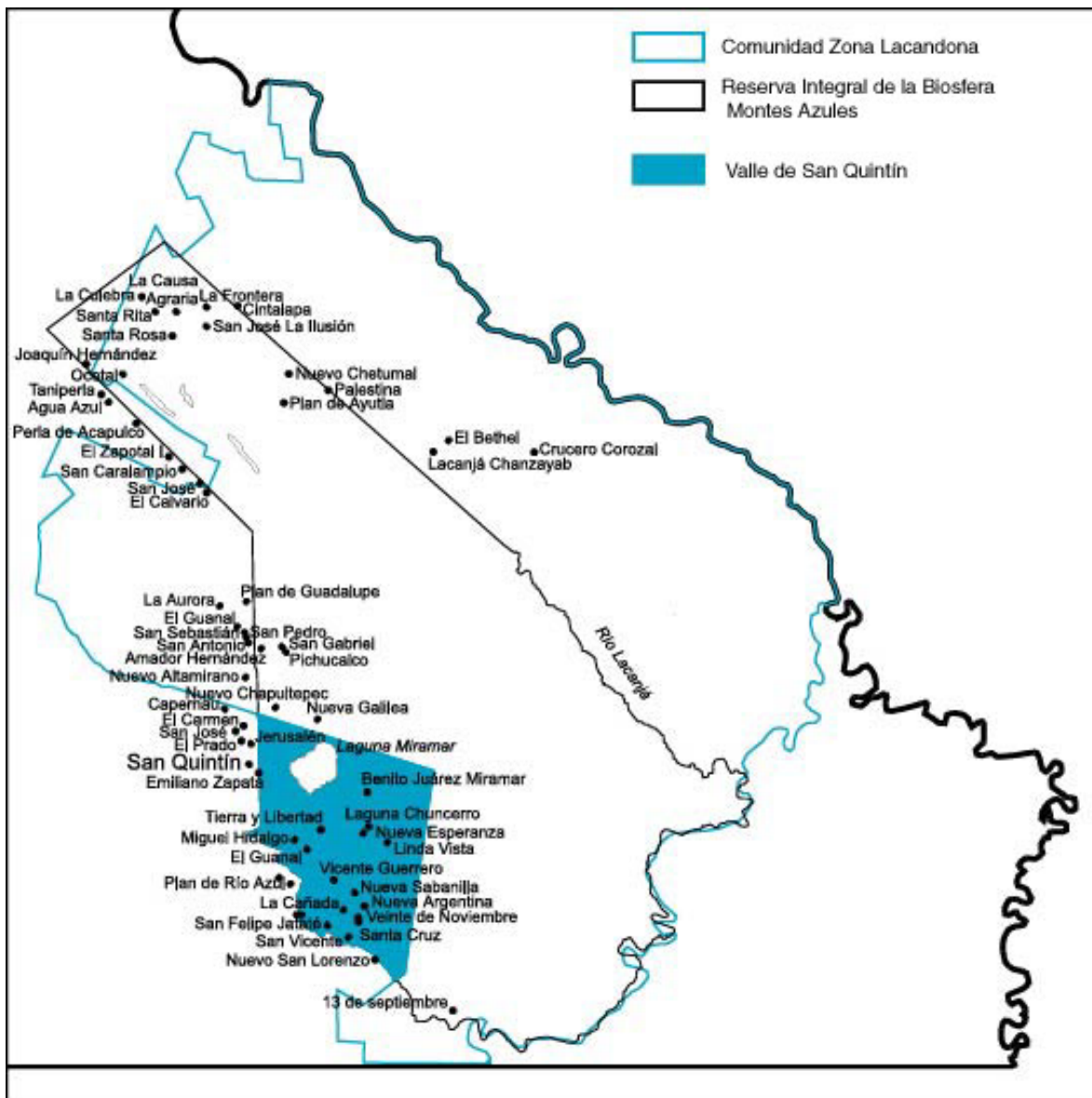


Map of the communities located within the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve's buffer zone. Among the communities threatened by the reserve are Emiliano Zapata, Agua Azul, Tierra y Libertad, Vientes de Noviembre (13 of November), Palestina (now Nuevo Palestina), El Zapotal, and Villas Rosas.

It should be noted that the Reserve encompasses is 331,200 hectares.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ N.A.. N.D., "Breve Historia de la Selva Lacandona"

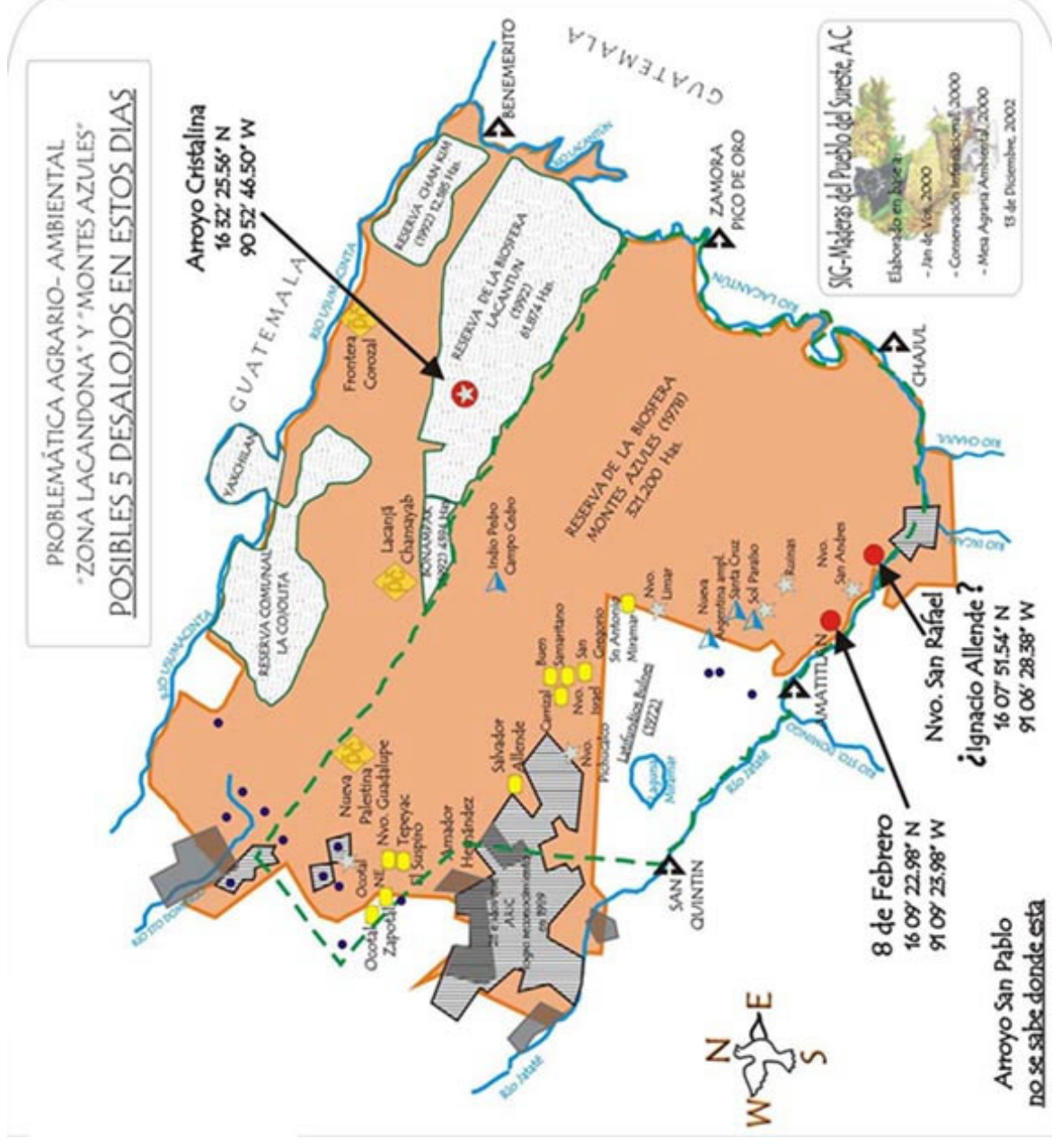
<<http://chiapas.pangea.org/html/item0080.htm#mapa4>> (30 June 2006); N.A.. N.D., "Breve Historia de la Selva Lacandona" <<http://chiapas.pangea.org/html/item0080.htm#mapa3>> (23 August 2006).



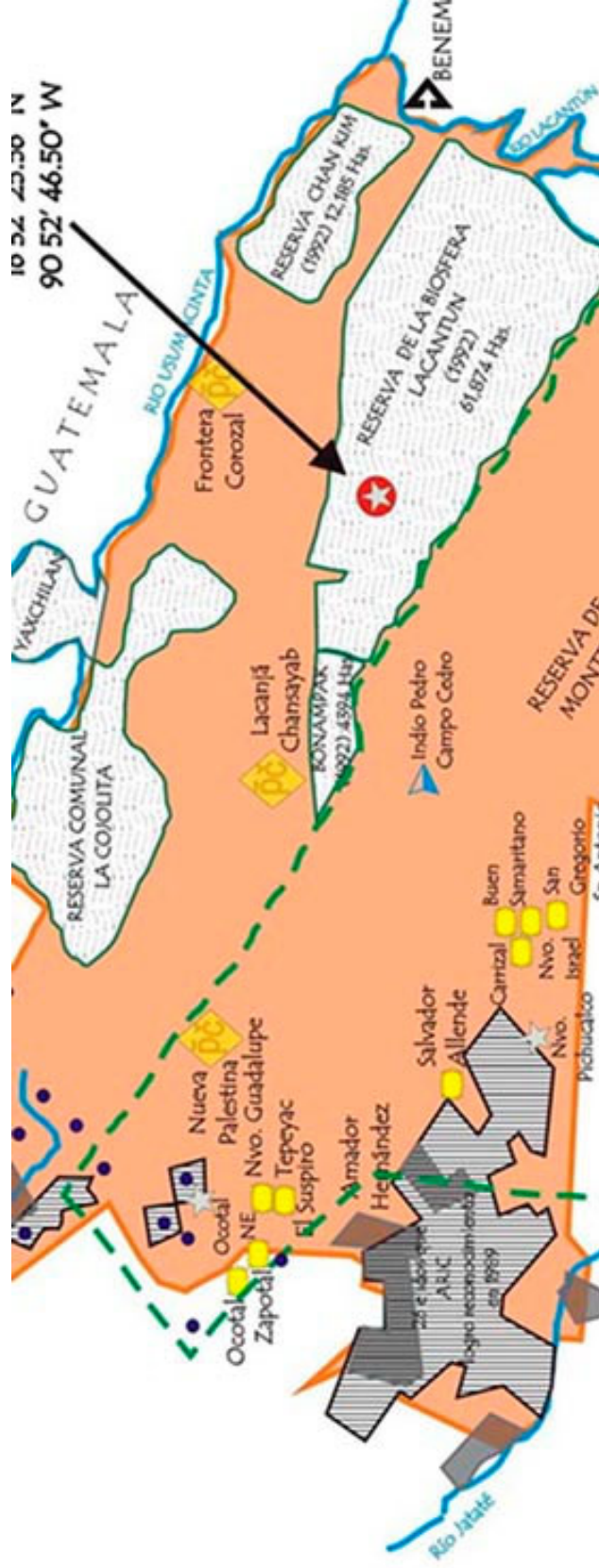
Map of the same communities within the original planned boundaries of the reserve, superimposed on the territory of the Lacandón Community Zone. The black line represents the Reserve boundaries which encompass some 331,200 hectares. The blue line representing the surrounding area is the Lacandón Community which encompasses some 614,000 hectares.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ N.A.. N.D., "Breve Historia de la Selva Lacandona"

<<http://chiapas.pangea.org/html/item0080.htm#mapa3>> (30 June 2006); N.A.. N.D., "Breve Historia de la Selva Lacandona" <<http://chiapas.pangea.org/html/item0080.htm#mapa3>> (23 August 2006).

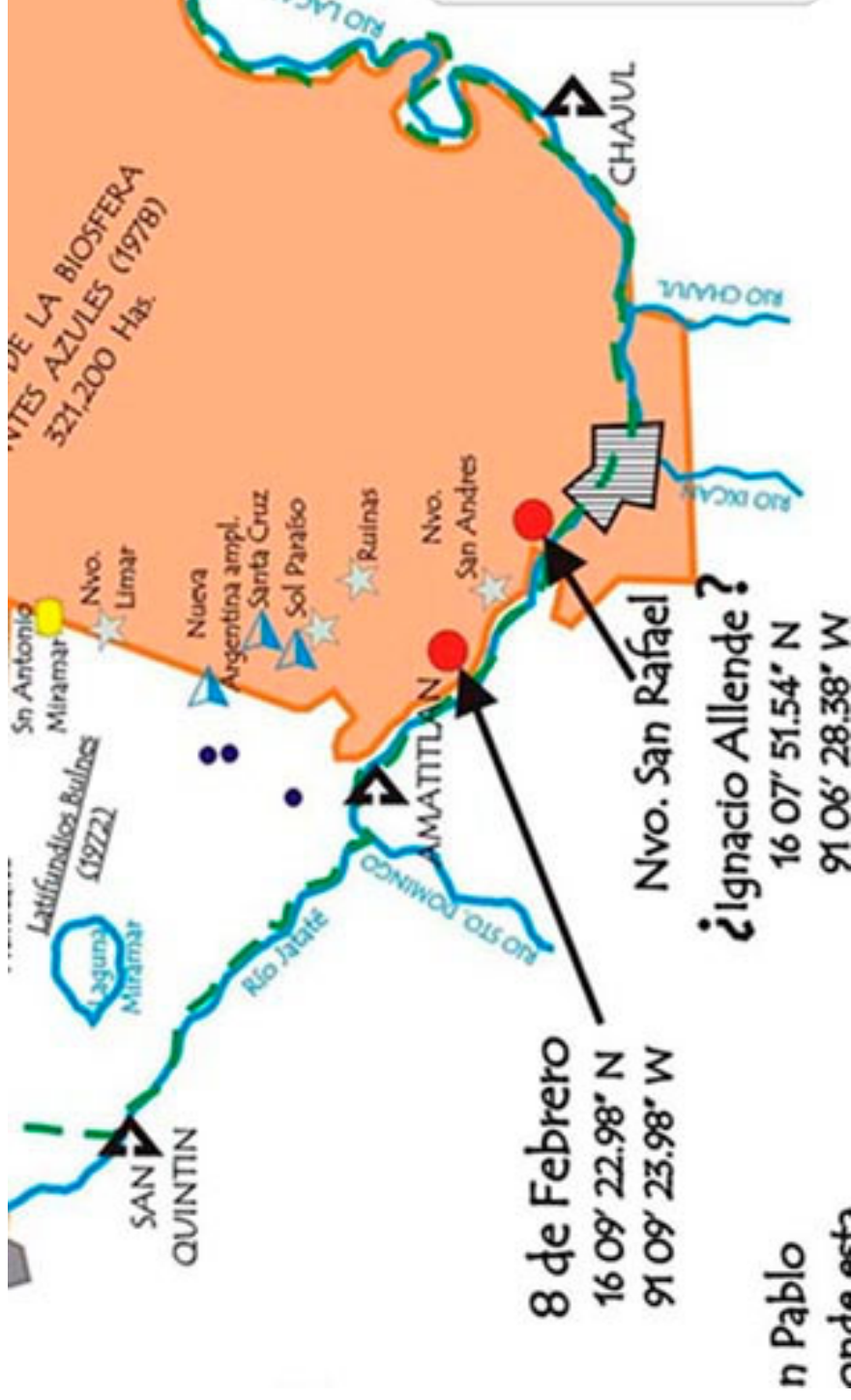


A map provided by La Neta in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas of some of the communities that have been targeted for expulsion, represented by the yellow flashes, red dots, and blue arrows. The map here represents 614,321 hectares.



Detail of a map from the La Neta San Cristóbal las Casas of proposed expulsions, showing the location of Nueva Guadalupe, Ocotlán, Zapotán, Amador Hernández, among others. The reserve's boundaries are represented by the green line while the area in orange represents the total area of the Lacandon jungle.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ N.A., 15 December 2002, "Amenaza de desalojo violento de las siguientes comunidades," <<http://www.laneta.apc.org/sc/c/urgencia/021214montesazules.htm>> (29, June 2006).



Detail of a map from the La Neta San Cristóbal las Casas de proposed expulsions, showing the location of Neuvo San Rafael, the community threatened with expulsion by the Lacandón.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ N.A., 15 December 2002, “Amenaza de desalojo violento de las siguientes comunidades,” <http://www.laneta.apc.org/sc/c/urgencia/021214montesazules.htm> (29, June 2006).

Appendix Four – The Lacandón Jungle in Mexico.



Map of the state of Chiapas in Mexico. The Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve is outlined in dark green on the upper right hand side.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ N.A., 20 July 2005, "SP5: 'Racial Other'," <<http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/spanish/SP5/race/>> (15 October, 2006). It should be noted that the map included is from a course outline of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Cambridge. This is owing to the fact that there are dearth of useful maps that clearly outline where the Reserve is situated in Chiapas. Similarly, I had to go to a travel website for a good map outlining Chiapas in Mexico.



Map of Mexico with the state of Chiapas outlined in mauve.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ N.A., N.D., “Mapa de Chiapas,” <<http://www.map-of-mexico.co.uk/espanola/mapa-de-chiapas.htm>> (15 October, 2006).

Appendix Five – Communities Affected by the Montes Azules Reserve According to the Autonomous Municipality of Ricardo Flores Magón

Communities Facing Total Dislocation Within the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve:²⁷⁰

- Laguna el Paraíso
- Laguna Suspiro
- Nuevo San Pedro
- Nuevo Guadalupe Tepeyac and
- Nueva Cintalapa
- 6 de Octubre

Communities Whose Ejidal Rights Are Directly Affected by Montes Azules:

- Chamizal
- Cintalapa
- El Jardín
- La Culebra
- Limonar
- Plan de Ayutla
- San Antonio Escobar
- Santa Rita
- Taniperla
- Villa las Rosas and
- Zapotal

Communities Whose Ejidal Rights Are Directly Affected by the Lacandón Community Zone:

- Arroyo Granizo
- Lacanjá Tseltal
- Niños Héroes
- Plan de Guadalupe
- Santo Domingo

Communities Directly Affected by the REBIMA Buffer Zone:

- Agua Azul
- Calvario
- Censo
- El Zapotal
- Emiliano Zapata
- Guadalupe San Luis
- Infiernillo
- Lacandón
- Manuel Velasco Suarez

²⁷⁰ Ricardo Flores Magón Autonomous Municipality in Rebellion, 25 March 2002 “A Shadow of Death is Being Raised in the Heart of Our Land, Our Mother, Our Selva,”
<<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/2002/amc/rfmMARCH.html>> (30 June 2006).

- Monte Líbano
- Nuevo Monte Líbano
- Perla de Acapulco
- San Caralampio
- San Francisco
- San Jerónimo
- San José
- Santa Elena
- Sibal
- Taniperla
- Zaragoza